

MORAL DEGENERATION IN CONTEMPORARY ZIMBABWEAN BUSINESS PRACTICES



MUNYARADZI MAWERE

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Langa Research & Publishing CIG
Mankon, Bamenda

Publisher

Langaa RPCIG

Langaa Research & Publishing Common Initiative Group

P.O. Box 902 Mankon

Bamenda

North West Region

Cameroon

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www.langaa-rpcig.net

Distributed in and outside N. America by African Books Collective

orders@africanbookscollective.com

www.africanbookcollective.com

ISBN: 9956-726-97-4

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Dedication

*To my wife, Annastacia and my beloved daughter,
Panaxe I humbly and gratefully dedicate this book.*

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Preface

This book generally focuses on contemporary business and the moral sphere therein. In particular, it explores the business-ethics relationship in a society characterized by unprecedented socio-economic and political crisis. While the book discusses business ethics in general and the myth of amoral business as commonly embraced by some businesses today the world-over, it adopts Zimbabwe as a case study. The choice of Zimbabwe as a case study is not by accident; it owes to the fact that Zimbabwe has been drastically ravaged by an unprecedented economic and political crisis since the turn of the new millennium.

It should be remarked that the subject of business ethics has not only provoked concerted debate among academicians, proprietors, politicians and even members of the public in Zimbabwe alone, but in Africa as a whole and the world-over. The debate has been chiefly sparked by the upsurge in cases of scandalous, unethical business practices in the business landscape in the recent times the world-over. An event is a scandal “only if perceived by the public as an act of wrongdoing”¹. Everyone whether inside or outside business, has been made curious to understand the causes of business scandals and other such business misconducts so as to forge ways to reduce or totally eradicate them from the business world. In the case of Zimbabwe, it is the socio-economic challenges faced by the country since the turn of the new millennium that has invited and incited serious debate on the subject of business ethics. Amidst such challenges, the myth of amoral business has fast gained root in the Zimbabwean business sector thereby aggravating the country’s crisis.

It is in this light that the book explores the myth of amoral business and the concept of business ethics; to justify the necessity of integrating a culture of ethics in business even during a time of crisis, economic or otherwise. The

book thus notes that though the integration of business and ethics in the face of socio-economic and political challenges in Zimbabwe is riddled with numerous absurdities and controversies; cultivating an ethic culture is a necessary in business decision making by business people, if the country's business sector is to gain a modicum of respect.

In the attempt to harmonize business and ethics even in times of crises, a comparative analysis of the political and economic situations in the pre-Government of National Unity (pre-GNU) period from 1980 when Zimbabwe got its national independence from Britain, and the political and economic situations in the post-GNU period is made. The post-GNU period is the time after the Government of National Unity (GNU) between Zimbabwe's political rivals: the two formations of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC)- (MDC-T and MDC-M)- and Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) was formed in February 2009. The book notes that there is a positive correlation between a political democracy and a liberalized economy that embraces and cherishes business ethical values, and success thereof. It further argues that the formation of the GNU, that has sought to democratize the political landscape and the market as well as minimizing the redolence of profiteering by some business people, has helped in arresting the endemic economic crisis that has troubled Zimbabwe since the turn of the new millennium.

Initially, the concepts "business", "ethics" and "business ethics" are critically analysed before the relationship between ethics, business and business ethics is pronounced as that of "usual bed fellows" and never "mortal enemies". In this light, the book criticizes, dismantles and dispels the myth of amoral business practices and pronounces the indispensability of an ethical culture in the Zimbabwean business landscape as a necessity. This way, the interdependence and indispensability of business and ethics in Zimbabwe, Africa, and all societies characterized as war

zones the world-over, is therefore pronounced and pushed forward.

To achieve this objective, the book employs historical, pragmatic, and philosophical approaches with numerous “exemplary cases” drawn from Zimbabwe and the African continent and others from different continents in the world. I believe the fruits of this intellectual inventory will be a blessing not just to philosophy and business schools, but also to social anthropologists, economic historians, and members of the public, who benefit immensely from the increasing availability of the treasure of literature on this controversial issue- business and business ethics in a society marred with economic and political crises -rendered ethically and in ways conforming to the discursive parameters of scholarly works. In most if not all countries, the approaches used in this book come as a necessity because in the name of the myth of amoral business and political excuses, unnecessary business misconducts and scandalous business crimes are committed, but normally at the expense of the general public, the business organization(s) concerned and the government. The virtue of this book thus, is to ascertain the indispensability and necessity of a culture of ethics in business of any magnitude, especially as a strategy where “forces of business” would essentially and simultaneously benefit their organizations and the people they serve, that is, business professionals and their organizations, members of the public and their national governments. The book is therefore a contribution towards efforts by researchers in the field of business ethics, economic history, and anthropology the world-over.

The book discusses business and business ethics in societies with heightened socio-economic and political crises using a case study of Zimbabwe, not because the latter is the only country in such a sorry situation in Africa and the world-over, but because it is one country that has been drastically impacted by the aforesaid crises, mostly in a negative way. In fact, apart from battling with business and business ethics

cleavages of its crumbling economy, Zimbabwe faces excruciating demands of political and economic democracy which it is failing to meet. This ascends the pedestal and gravity of her crisis that is mainly occasioned by political mismanagement. The main problem, however, is whether we can in any meaningful and coherent manner talk about business and business ethics in an African society like Zimbabwe with political and economic crises that covers or incorporates the inevitable nuances that go with cultural and individual differences of the African people in the continent and those in the Diaspora. I have adopted the principles of charity where in hermeneutical studies I am allowed to carry out my interpretation with some sense of liberalism and assumption which is not harmful to the spirit of interpretation and writing. As such, I have assumed that all Africans in the continent and those in the Diaspora are bound to have more, problems and virtues, in common than with people of other continents. Also, I have not pretended to say everything about business and business ethics in societies with heightened economic and political crises except that which directly intertwine with the theme of this book. I have used more examples common in some [other than drawn from the case study, Zimbabwe] African countries than others, but making sure not to lose focus in my treatment of business and business ethics in a society impacted with socio-economic and political crises.

For a majority of students of philosophy [business ethics], business studies, economic history and anthropology, this is a text they would enjoy reading. It shows them the wisdom that lies in “liberal thinking” and encourages them to start on the path of critical thinking and careful reasoning for themselves. The book, above all else, attempts to show that questioning, and indeed right questioning, matters most, not only in philosophy but other spheres of life. To this end, I have attempted to promote debate and honest self-reflection on the socio-economic and political situations prevalent in most African countries and others that are non-African.

Notes

1. Richard T. De George, “Developing Ethical Standards for International Business and Government” in Paul M. Minus., (Ed) (1993). *The Ethics of Business in a Global Economy*, Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Introduction

This book is about business and business ethics in a society characterized by a cocktail of socio-economic and political crises. It introduces and characterizes the controversies arising in an effort to integrate business and ethics in an environment battling with socio-economic and political cleavages. Of great concern are the ethical questions which emanate as soon as we propagate an ethical culture in business in a society drastically affected by unprecedented economic and political crises such as Zimbabwe, among others. With unprecedented economic crisis and political instability caused by political illegitimacy brought about by the highly contested national elections since the year 2000, Zimbabwe especially before the formation of the GNU in February 2009, had all the earmarks of a country in a state of crisis. And where there is an economic and political crisis, most of the decisions by business people are made a morally excruciating endeavour. In fact, they are normally caught in a dilemma between maximizing their profits and sacrificing the profits at the expense of ethics. To many business people, the obligation to uphold ethical values and profit maximization especially during times of crisis appears to be conflicting. It is actually in the face of such truisms that intellectual uneasiness and philosophical inquiry on business and business ethics in a society earmarked with socio-economic and political crises begin.

The book employs historical and philosophical approaches as well as case studies in discussing the concepts “business”, “ethics” and “business ethics”. These approaches have the immediate advantage that they shed more light on the contested nature and possible root causes of the diversity in the understanding of these concepts and their impact on society thereof. More so, the approaches make it feasible to accord a general appreciation of the present day discussion of

ethics in business, notwithstanding the difference in accent throughout history.

Since the concept of business ethics is highly contentious, the book grapples with the following questions: “What is business ethics? Are the two, business and ethics related in any way?” Due consideration is accorded to various classical theories that have formed the underpinning for philosophical study of business ethics such as subjectivism, cultural relativism and utilitarianism. These theories, explicitly or otherwise, enable us to carefully unravel and philosophically analyse the contentions that shield the concepts in question. One should however bear in mind that the diversity of theories which lay principles to determine human character also makes business and ethics essentially contested concepts. This means that the concepts are complex to handle in so far as they have no universally accepted definitions. In view of this, the book will make a critical and comprehensive assessment of different positions and thereby work towards some conclusions about them.

Granted, the book advances to examine the business-ethics relationship to determine how they could be integrated. The central aim of the integration of business and ethics thus, is explored. One of the reasons is that, there are some philosophers who argue for its impossibility. Such philosophers advance the so-called “myth of amoral business” which is a belief that business and ethics do not mix. It can be suggested that the different understanding of similar concepts is brought by the fact that issues involved in business and ethics are philosophical and sometimes do conflict. Resultantly, the concepts remain highly controversial and their integration questionable. But is business independent or yet enriched by ethics?

This work supports the compatibility of business and ethics as it is opposed to the “myth of amoral business”. The role of ethics in business is therefore proffered. This perspective defends the integration of business and ethics from two main dimensions, that is, African communalism

and utilitarianism. African communalism is the view that society is a single body with mutually interacting components. As traditionally known and written by John Mbiti, it is “a spirit of love, sharing, unity and harmony”¹.

To further explicate the indispensable relationship of the two, business and ethics, the book goes further into examining the relationship between all business elements of consumerism and ethics. Business elements of “consumerism” such as production, marketing, advertising, pricing and selling are examined for various ethical concerns. In the same thrust, it is acknowledged that the answer to moral problems is very difficult to stipulate. However, it is suggested that moral teaching to key business players such as producers, employers, business leaders and employees is a necessity if these are to maintain a modicum of respect and sanity in their business organizations. Consumers can also be taught to respect business institutions while keeping check on any scrupulous manipulation by business people. Education for the former (producers, employers, business leaders and employees) and consumers can be achieved through workshops, teaching business ethics in schools and civic education whereby people are educated to discern any action by businesses meant to manipulate them and dangerous products from those which are not. However, a crucial question arises here: “Who should be responsible for educating the populace in the case of, for example, civic education?” The line of argument that the book advances is that it should not be the role of the government of any society to decide on the ethical codes to abide by lest it will take advantage of its power and exercise monopoly. This could be so because many governments do business transactions as well. Hence, instead of government, independent agents or non-governmental organizations like World Health Organization, Save Children, Care International, World Vision, Help Age International, among others, should be credited with the role of sensitizing and educating the public-young and old- of their rights and

entitlements if there is to be 'fairness' in business. On the other hand, B-Schools should be encouraged to teach business ethics as a compulsory course.

Though the book considers Zimbabwe as a case study, its objective is to reconstruct, revive and advance the view that business and ethics are always bed fellows and never mutual enemies even in times of socio-economic crises. It is reactionary to the position advanced by such scholars as Alert Carr, Friedman and Sterger that business and ethics are incompatibles. With notable concern, the book also emphasizes that ethics is the bedrock upon which all our relationships in society, not only in business are built.

Notes

1. Mbiti J.S., (1999). *African Philosophy and Religion*, 2nd Ed, Heinemann, p.113.

Chapter One

Business and Ethics: Conceptual Analysis

Moral concepts can best be understood if examined in line with their history. As such, this book examines the historical background of ethics in business before discussing the concepts of business, ethics and business ethics. In fact, it is necessary when defining the concept of business ethics, to reduce it into simpler components. Attention shall firstly be given to the concept of business and then ethics if we are to understand the concept of business ethics as a whole. In this respect, the book adopts Rene Descartes' reductionism theory of analysis that to understand a complex proposition it is necessary to "reduce the obscure propositions step by step to those which are simpler"¹. This method of analysis makes it possible and easier to philosophically examine and understand the concepts of business and ethics and to formulate a workable definition of the obscure proposition of business ethics.

Historical Background of Ethics in Business

Reflection upon ethical matters is not unique to the modern times. In philosophy, it dates back to the classical period with philosophers such as Plato. Minus, in his *Ethics of Business*, argues that:

In the Western culture, ethics began with Plato. Aristotle raised it further to an independent philosophical discipline alongside logic and physics, its main object was to answer the question of the greatest good and the right

measure from which rational and virtuous actions would ensue².

Contributing to the debate on the nature and origins of ethical principles, Ray Billington raises the question: “When is it that an ethical principle becomes one such thing?”³. He looks at the origins of scientific principles and seeks to compare that with ethics. For him, Isaac Newton was the founder of the principle of gravity in the 17th century. Does this mean that the principle did not exist prior to Newton’s utterances? Exporting this to ethics, Billington says:

Love thy neighbour as thyself was first written, say around 1000bc. Nobody who has read or heard that statement except a psychopath will disagree with it. But did its validity commence only at the time when it was given verbal expression? Of course not. If the principle was universally valid after 1000BC, it was valid before 1000BC. It was valid from the time homosapiens first appeared on this planet and began to interact with members of his species⁴.

Following from Billington’s assertion, one can deduce that ethics began some time even before Plato himself. It could be that as time went on ethics discussions also went on in full swing together with the growing population and its business elements like production, marketing and advertising. It is even argued that in the 13th century, retailers worried very little about the dangers the products they sold could inflict upon the public. Because of this unethical behaviour, Saint Thomas Aquinas laid an ethical principle in which he described any sale as unlawful if a defect in the product sold is not disclosed to the buyer by the seller⁵. If this business

ethical principle was laid in as early as the 13th century, it clearly shows that ethics in which law is a constituent has a long standing history. The fact that by the 13th century some products sold by some business people were with defects clearly shows that Aquinas' principle was not without contestants though these are not given by names by historians of philosophy of the time.

It is curious to notice that even though the idea that ethics is in some sense an illusion is very old, its main historical thrust for us today perhaps come from authors of the 19th century like Schopenhauer(1788-1860) and Nietzsche. Schopenhauer, for instance, argues that, "morality is not discovered but created. His admirer Nietzsche describes morality as 'a fiction but a necessary fiction, a fiction that mankind cannot possibly live without'"⁶. This assertion has the implication that, ethics is as old as humanity. It came to the fore with the creation of mankind. In line with this, most contemporary philosophers on ethics like Richard T. DeGeorge, William Shaw, George Benson and Popkin and Stroll, among others, seem to understand ethics generally as human oriented guiding principles from human reason, oral law, societal values and religion which people should follow in order to live harmoniously with each other. Thus, this still bow down to the fact that ethics is as ancient as the human race itself. Its genesis lies in humankind.

Ethics having developed through history as has been shown, classical authors on economic matters from ancient Greece like Plato to Medieval practitioners like Saint Thomas Aquinas and economists of early modern age were all concerned in varying degrees with ethical issues in different spheres of life. In one way or another, they saw economics as a branch of practical reason in which concepts of good, right and the obligatory were quite central. What happened then?

In response to this question, Sen in *Ethics of Business* had this to say:

It is Adam Smith who can be described as the father of modern Economics who made economics and business in general scientific and hard-headed. And the new economics that emerged in the 19th and 20th centuries was all ready to do business with no ethics to keep it tied to morals⁷.

This view of what happened is not only reflected in volumes of professional economics writings but has even reached the status of penetrating into modern business environments with people like Milton Friedman and Albert Carr.

As such, though it is generally agreed that both ethics and business are human oriented activities, the concept of business ethics as a whole has been viewed as a confusing one. To many philosophers, this is a very controversial concept. Thus the aforementioned historical background of this concept has been sketched in order to show that the present day discussion of ethics in business, notwithstanding the differences in accent, has significant historical precedent. On the other hand, this has been done to see whether there is lack of self-critical ethical reflection on business practices of this day.

The Philosophical Nature of Business

The concept business is frustratingly vague or rather ambiguous. It has been a bone of contention among moral philosophers. Consequently, the concept has been notoriously understood and defined by people of different

dimensions. LaGroix, for instance, has defined business as “any activity that encompasses part or the whole of economic functions between individuals and profit making organizations and other such organizations”⁸. Subjecting LaGroix’s definition to critical analysis, one may argue that it is weak for the reason that it narrowly defines the concept business in economic terms. In fact, it solely constricts business to the activity of buying and selling of goods and services for profit. The economic functions he mentions refer to business transactions like marketing, advertising and selling which can be between individuals and to a broader scale between nations. This definition represents the way people in and out of business world perceive business and would like to continue to perceive it. However, it raises critical questions: “Given this understanding of business, what could be said to be the business of business? And do we only deal with dollars and cents-money- in business?” Wright, in *The Business of Business* argues that, “it would be wrong to say the business of business is business”⁹. For him, profit maximization is not the only goal for business but rather one of the goals. This argument by Wright takes us to another critical question: “If profit maximization is one of the goals of business, what are the other goals of business?”

Grappling with similar question and others of the same kind, Ludwig Erhard and Alfred Muller Armark argue that business is “an economic system in which social concerns and free competition are successfully combined”¹⁰. This understanding of business has the immediate advantage that it upholds profit maximization while at the same time cherishes and strives to fulfil ethical requirements in business in serving the society. The definition thus clearly shows that business is more than an economic set of rules. It further shows that profit is not the only central yardstick by which business is

measured. Social concerns are also critical for business' success. In other words, business achievements can lose their claims to ethical standing if obtained by unscrupulous means such as corruption and bribery, among others. To avoid this kind of situation in business, the whole activity of buying and selling of services and goods should not be done for self-aggrandizement but for the satisfaction of people's basics, inclinations, desires or wants. Richard T. DeGeorge expounds this view further when he argues that, "business should be understood as an integral part of society and its activities. Since business activity is a human activity, it can be evaluated from a moral point of view just as any other human activity can be so evaluated"¹¹.

In more or less the same way as DeGeorge, Davis and Blomstrom had previously defined business as "the development processing of economic values in the society"¹². The implication of this definition is that the economic motive of business is to make profit by a direct interaction with the society. This line of thinking relates with 'African communalism' which emphasizes that all human oriented activities, business included, operate in a society to satisfy the societal needs and wants. In this process, business acts as a mini-society that transmits values to the bigger society as well as values from it. Affirming the aspect of interaction of business and society, Davis had it that, "normally the term business is used to apply to the private portion of economy whose primary purpose is to provide goods and services to the customers at a price"¹³. By this assertion, Davis connotes that in the process of interaction of business and society, there is a symbiotic relationship that can be referred to as "the give and take relationship". In this sense, both parties benefit from the exchange process. This can be exemplified by a woman who needs a packet of sugar from a shop. She

has to pay to the shop owner (who needs at least reasonable profits to remain in business) in order to get sugar. This kind of interaction between business and society entails that there is a mutual relationship of the general society with the business world.

In short, the relationship between business and society denotes that, they co-exist and correlate in an amicable manner. The co-existence of business and society can further result in one defining business as “a social system”¹⁴. This means that, business as a social system comprises a combination of interrelated components operating as a whole and for the common goal. In other words, the two are interdependent and operate in a holistic function in such a way that every component complements each other for efficient functioning.

Following from the above understanding, business can be technically understood as an economic system that aims at accumulating profits whilst it preserves the social needs of the community it serves such as fair pricing, freedom of choice, dignity, rule of law and other democratic practices. This is to say that, since business is enacted in a social society, it should cater for the societal interests, needs and values in its attempt to make profit. Both the society and business should benefit without straining each other in any way or by any means. Hence, business should be defined as such in terms of society.

The Philosophical and Practical Nature of Ethics

The concept ethics, though defined differently in terms of semantics, is reducible to what is good, bad, right and wrong. A borne of contention however arises when the question of what constitute that which is good, bad, right and wrong is

raised. In other words, people do not disagree on what is ethics but on what constitute that which is considered as good, bad, right or wrong. For this reason, many people think that ethics means something esoteric, impractical and far-removed from reality. This is to render problematic the whole status of ethical thought resulting in those who attempt to define ethics labelling it an essentially contested concept.

It can be argued that philosophers disagree on what is good, bad, right or wrong because each one of them tries by expressing his/her own attitude to bring others to a similar attitude. This kind of doing has made ethics everybody's game. Thus, though philosophers feel much attention and veneration should be paid to the concept 'ethics', to define it in an acceptable universally agreed manner has remained a thorny problem pertinent even to this day. However, I think it is only after the concept has been precisely unpacked that it becomes sound and essentially important to discuss what it (ethics) is and is all about especially in relation to business.

Plato in his *Republic* relates ethics to justice. He understands ethics in much the same way he understands justice which he defines as "that which is done to the advantage of everyone and not to the advantage of the stronger"¹⁵. Nevertheless, this seems applicable only in principle and not in practice for it is argued and convincingly so, by philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes that human beings are egoistic by nature.

Implicit in Kammer's own practice, we find a similar view as that of Plato. He asserts that "the fact that we are moral beings defines our humanness"¹⁶. Following Kammer's assertion, one can deduce that humans as moral beings have the rational or intellectual capacity to reflect on their and other people's actions. This view of ethics implies that the moral aspect of human beings is the fundamental tenet of

humanness. In this sense, a high degree of rationality should be assimilated together with logical scrutiny when making ethical decisions. Thus, the aforementioned assertion can be implied to mean that humans only become moral beings if they abide by certain moral principles; otherwise they are put in the same bracket with lower order animals like monkeys and baboons. DeGeorge expounds this view further when he posits that “ethics in general can be defined as a systematic attempt through the use of reasoning to make sense of our individual and social moral experience in such a way as to determine the rules which ought to govern human conduct and the values worth pursuing in life”¹⁷.

In the same stroke, Popkin and Stroll define ethics as a “set of principles or set of rules which sanction or forbid certain kinds of conduct”¹⁸. For instance, when speaking of business ethics one has to bear in mind some set of principles which determine or at least regulate the conduct of business vis-à-vis his customers, employers and competitors. In the like manner, William Shaw understands ethics as “that which concerns individual character, that is, how we ought to behave”¹⁹. From this understanding of ethics by the aforementioned scholars, one can safely say that ethics speculates about the nature of good life, about the ultimate worth of the goals men seek and about the supposed propriety of certain courses of conduct. As conceived, ethics is partly a “normative” or “hortatory” discipline in so far as it engages in speculations on which actions are wrong and which ones are acceptable and morally worthwhile. From this understanding, one can understand ethics loosely as the intrinsic sense of perceiving and bearing responsibility for the consequences of one’s decisions and deeds with respect to the commitment of rights of anyone. This signifies that the fundamental aspect of ethics is the “ought” which tells us the

don'ts and dos in life. Ethical theorizing thus almost always stems from the efforts of human beings to solve the practical immediate and pressing problems which rise in everyday life. Whenever one acts s/he either acts wrongly or rightly with wrongness or rightness being the backbone of ethics. But would this imply that ethics exists in all spheres, for instance, in the business world? Indeed this question appears simple or rather nonsensical by those with uncritical minds. However, this is not the case. Though the question is fundamental especially to the subject of this book, we shall give it more attention in the ensuing paragraphs. I am not going to go into it in too much detail here, because there is a bigger issue at stake (about which more in a second).

The preceding discussion has the implication that, the object of ethics is to philosophize about morality hence, the need to define morality. DeGeorge asserts that , “morality is a term used to cover those practices and activities that are considered importantly right and wrong, the rules which govern those activities and values that are imbedded, fostered or pursued by those activities and practices”²⁰. Making a follow-up of DeGeorge’s assertion, it implies that ethics is the philosophical study of morality; its object is to study morality. It is important however to note that the terms “ethics” and “morality” are treated by some people as slightly different basing on this understanding. For purposes of this work, the terms “ethics” and “morality” shall be used interchangeably throughout this book. In fact, what should be emphasized is that morality is a provider of injunctions that guide human beings in their conduct with others. In this regard, morality or ethics compels people to act in a certain way that is consistent with the expectations of the society they belong. For the sake of social consensus and harmony, people with common customs and traditions choose moral values which govern all

their activities as a society. Thus since morality is human oriented, people as a community have the freedom to revise or continue choosing what they want to value and pursue. But does the fact that something is valued and considered by a group to be right makes it right? If yes, why? And if no, how then do we determine the right?

The above questions though highly contentious, are some of the questions we have set to wrestle with in this book. It is worth noting that the different moral values upheld by different people or group of people can lead to ethical theories such as subjectivism, cultural relativism and objectivism. In brief, Cultural relativism for instance, holds that there are no universal moral truths since morality depends on one's culture. Objectivism asserts that the good or bad is and ought to be universally understood. On the other hand, subjectivism contends that what is good or bad depends on one's inclinations, feelings and desires. Critically analysing the above mentioned theories, one can denote that further contentious questions might arise. A fundamental question thus arises at this juncture: "Given all these theories as determinants of the question of morality, which one should be considered most? Should everyone value and purse his or her own desires, needs, wants, inclinations and feelings more than anything else in the society?"

In view of the above stated theories, one can be tempted to say that objectivism is the most appropriate hand tool towards answering the questions posed. But is there any act that is objectively or universally good? Obviously no because in deciding moral "oughts," people are often influenced by their background, cultural or otherwise, to think the way they do. From a subjective point of view, the questions posed seem to be best addressed by cultural relativism. It seems objectivism is inapplicable here. To universalize morality will

be a grave error because there will be no account for differences which cut across cultures in valuing actions. Runes is another philosopher who affirms this notion. He points out that, “there are certain actions which are right or bad for all individuals alike or in the same society”²¹. This does not however mean some people are identical for this has been rightfully relegated by Leibniz in his metaphysical principle of indiscernible or identity where he asserts that, “no two perfections can be exactly alike yet occupy two different spaces”²². Instead, the quotation affirms that acts can be either morally good or bad depending on norms and values of a particular people which is generally referred to as “dependency thesis”. For example, in Netherlands abortion is morally acceptable and legal. It is even used as a family planning method yet in most African societies like Zimbabwe, Swaziland and Botswana such an act undercuts human dignity and is considered first-degree murder. This implies that, each society has moral codes that bind it as a people. Similarities between societies are therefore only understood as coincidences and not an indication that there are universal moral laws.

DeGeorge buttresses the idea that morality as ethics cannot be evaluated from a subjective or individual perspective but collectively. He argues that “a business may ignore the moral demands of an individual but it can hardly ignore the moral demands of the whole society since it is part of that society”²³. This is to say that, every individual should act as per moral demands of the society in which s/he is part. Otherwise, there would be chaos in societies if every person would do whatever s/he feels is right regardless of what is rationally expected of him by the society as a whole. This analysis has the implication that even though the concept “ethics” is notoriously controversial, its existence, significance

and collective application by members of society remain substantially justified. This line of thinking will be further stressed in the chapter where a critical analysis of the business-ethics dichotomy and how ethics is transposed into business are presented.

Notes

1. Russell B., (1996). *History of Western Philosophy*, Routledge, London, p.567.
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Chapter Two

The Relationship between Business and Ethics

In the recent years there has been much discussion over the decline of ethical business practices on a global scale. We have witnessed a proliferation of well-practiced scandals involving cheating, embezzlements, misinformation and other such forms of corporate dishonesty. Such business practices have resulted in the ethicists, members of the public and other such interested parties questioning if there is any existent relationship between business and ethics. It is this fundamental question we are set to grapple with throughout this chapter.

The General Understanding of Business Ethics

Having looked at the concepts of business and ethics separately in the preceding paragraphs, let us see how the two relate in historical and philosophical as well as practical contexts. But before that let us think seriously for a moment on whether business and ethics are always compatible given that the recognition and acceptance of business ethics is still contested on many grounds.

Business ethics as understood throughout history has a meaning which is very porous. It has been labelled a highly controversial and essentially contested concept in so far as there is lack of a clear universally accepted definition of the concept. Consequently, numerous versions have cropped in, making the concept even more complex, obscure and difficult to philosophically unpack. A mind boggling question can however be raised: “Which one between business and ethics

should be more fundamental given priority when doing business? Should it be business per se or ethics or both?"

Among versions emanating from the debate on business ethics, are two intriguing but very different counterweights which seem fundamentally significant. One is summed up in the views of economists Milton Friedman, Albert Carr and Ulrich Steger. These have manipulated on the controversies surrounding the concept "business ethics" to defend the so-called "myth of amoral business". As has been argued by DeGeorge "this myth like other myths, has several variations yet like many myths it states a partial truth and hides a portion of reality that it can adequately handle"¹. The partial truth of the myth is it represents attitudes of business organizations that are deeply affected with the redolence of profiteering and states what many people both in and out of business believe about business and business people. However, the myth fails to acknowledge that business at all levels presupposes certain basic standards without which business would be impossible and one of these basics is business ethics. The myth also ignores and is unable to explain scandals and public protests against violation of basic societal norms by some businesses the world-over. As such, while some people believe the myth, others do not. The myth of amoral business claims that business and ethics are natural enemies. Like water and oil, they do not mix or intermingle in any way. Neither do they work hand in glove to cushion each other. According to the myth, business is morally neutral; hence it has nothing to do with morality. It has its own distinct rules divorced from those in morality and so business is not structured to handle moral questions or moral problems. Instead, it concerns itself solely with profit maximization by any means necessary and nothing else. It is out of this simple logic that ethics is denied access and place

in business whatsoever and that the two cannot be reconciled for the efficient functioning of each other.

One of the prominent advocates of the myth of amoral business, Steger has labelled the concept “business ethics” an oxymoron, that is, a contradiction in terms. He argues that the two, business and ethics, are distinct from each other. Mixing them is committing a categorical fallacy in which two purely distinct categories are fused. In fact, Steger views the relationship between business and ethics as that of perpetual conflict and not mutuality. He even supports egoistic tendencies of capitalism like corruption and bribery for he maintains that they are acceptable in business. Steger projects this probably because he believes that business strives solely to serve its own interests like profit maximization. A crucial question, however, arises: “Is Steger’s assertion that business is divorced from ethics practically sustainable?”

The economist, Milton Friedman in defending the myth employs an organization theory. The Organization theory states that business enterprises or corporates are not moral entities but legal agencies whose sole goal is profit maximization. In other words, the theory contends that business enterprises are not moral agents but human beings and it is only human beings who are morally responsible. Friedman like Steger vehemently relegates the integration of business and ethics as he goes on to postulate that the primary or “sole responsibility of business corporations is to maximize profits so long they stay within the rules of the game”². He further argues that:

The concept of social responsibility embodies a fundamental contradiction and will if implemented [in business] erode the function of the enterprise system and

grossly diminish its ability to contribute to economic growth³.

The line of reasoning which can be derived from this quotation is that, if social responsibility is applied to business, the business' ability to make profits will be compromised. What Friedman is emphasizing is that businesses are only legal entities and are legally liable to make profits. On the other hand, human beings are moral beings and only moral beings, not business can be said to be morally accountable. Hence for Friedman, one cannot be a business person and a moralist at the same time. It is therefore a matter of choice, to be either a moralist or a business person.

Albert Carr⁴ is another scholar who believes that business is amoral. In his famous essay, *Is Business Bluffing Ethical?*, Carr put to test the widely held view that ethical standards are absolute and universally binding. Beauchamp and Bowie quote him as remarking that the "violations of the ethical ideals of society are common in business, but they are not necessarily violations of business principles"⁵. Carr equates business to a poker game which does not reflect on morality. For him, some of the things that we generally regard as morally unacceptable in society are actually morally acceptable in a poker game and the same applies to business principles and societal values. His argument is that, in business like in a poker game, each player uses all possible means at his disposal to achieve and safeguard his own personal interests and not interests of the other. If we are to accept cheating and deception as part of the game strategy of business, then they cease to be morally offensive. Carr would, therefore, defend organizations and individuals who deliberately exaggerate the virtues of their products and services they deal with, lying and hiding products' defects as

part of the game strategy of business. Once falsehoods that are characteristic of the business game have become deeply entrenched in the participants, they cease to be falsehoods and assume the position of “acceptable truth” in the business world. Carr like Thomas Hobbes who asserts that, “one ought to serve his own interests because he can do nothing else”⁶ advocates psychological egoism.

Transposing Carr’s argument, though a mistaken one, into the business landscape the world-over, his analogy makes a lot of sense. At international level are well known scandals such as among others, the Valdez incident, the Bhopal disaster, the BCCI debacle and the 1991 abuses of pension and other funds by Robert Maxwell at an international level. This is the same scenario with African businesses and is in particular a true representation and reflection of most businesses in Zimbabwe where immoral business practices like corruption, bribery, deception, embezzlement and others have taken centre stage in most if not all business institutions in the country. We have “big fish”-individuals like Chikoore (Noczim Oil Company), Tavengwa (Harare City Council) and Kumbirai Kangai (Grain Marketing Board) only to mention but a few, who have been allegedly accused (in the recent years) to have been involved in corruption and embezzlement of funds⁷. In addition to this, business in Zimbabwe seems to have no concern for customers. The so- called “black market” has planted roots and the Consumer Council of Zimbabwe (CCZ) has lost its legitimacy and integrity. Prices now controlled by business people themselves are skyrocketing changing on almost daily basis. However, would this render justification to Steger, Friedman and Carr’s arguments that business people should only be concerned with profit maximization?

Though the myth of amoral business is a formidable challenge to business ethics, this work would not succumb to it. Instead, it is set to dispel it into the corridors of oblivion. In other words, we would rather consider the opposite line of thought placed against the idea of the myth of amoral business. Critics in this camp rightly allude to the view that business and ethics do mix. Prominent among ethicists who set foot to dispel the myth of amoral business include William Shaw, George Benson, R.T. DeGeorge, among others. Against the claim that business has nothing to do with ethics, Benson for instance, argues that there is need for integrating ethics and business and come up with “business ethics”. He understands “business ethics” as “those principles that guide businessmen in commercial connections with suppliers, customers, workers, employees and the public in general”⁸. In this case, the principles that guide businessmen are the ethical codes or the “oughts” to be done in order to maintain good conduct in business. Benson thus rebuts Steger’s argument that business ethics is an oxymoron. For him, business which is a miniature society and ethics operate in a holistic function. Benson’s further argument that business corporation is viewed as a miniature community with ethical rules enable its community members, that is, the employees, customers and suppliers to interact harmoniously, renders Steger’s argument futile. In fact, for Benson and indeed so, in real business the contradiction between business and ethics can hardly be seen if ever there.

It is clear that Benson’s view that there is need for ethics in business is an able one, deserving to be seriously considered. Nevertheless, it must be advancement not only in ethical theory but also in ethical practice. More so, the culture of ethics should not only be considered only where there is economic and political peace. It should be seriously cherished

even in hard times and during times of crisis, economic or otherwise. Put it differently, we need a new force of change in the way we see the role of ethics in society. As such, upholding an ethical culture in business at all times should be viewed as a morally legitimate way of righting business wrongs and not as a threat to profit maximization. This understanding of business relates with “African communalism” in which the spirit of love, sharing and harmony overrides. John Mbiti even expresses the philosophy of the African traditional people as embodied in the dictum, “I am because we are and since we are therefore I am”⁹. This African philosophy of life correctly expressed by Mbiti can be conveyed to imply the interdependence between business and the community it serves and in which it thrives. If business is to exist, there should be a community to serve at a fair price and for people to live well in a society they need to engage in business activities. Thus for business, where there is no community to serve, there is no business. Even where society exists but business is conducted in an unethical manner, there will be little or no business. This serves to mean that business people should observe certain business ethical codes if their businesses are to perpetuate. Carl Wellman in his contribution to business-ethics discussion remarks that, “ethics embraces practices, human decisions and conduct”¹⁰. This implies that general ethics cover practices which an individual whether in business or not has to follow. Thus it is because of this undeniable interdependence of business and ethics that to argue that business and ethics are contradictory is to fail totally to understand the meaning of business ethics. How can people in business operate without ethical codes to guide them? Would not this like trying to drive a car without fuel? A symbiotic relationship between business and society can be further likened to that of a husband and a wife in a

family institution. One can hardly do without the other if it is to be a stable family institution. Likewise, business and its members through ethical conduct should complement each other for the enrichment of business and its material benefits of the entire society. Both parties, that is, business and the public should bear responsibility for whatever they do. For example, business should provide durable efficient products and services at a fair price and use customers as its profit making agencies. The public in reciprocation should promote and pay the respect to business corporations to strengthen their relationship. These expectations, rights and responsibilities by either of the parties show how closely business is knitted to ethics. All this tantamount to saying each member in business is expected to observe certain values when conducting and making business decisions whether inside or outside business.

Granted, it is clear that Steger rushed to give a preconceived conclusion in conceding that the concept “business ethics” is an oxymoron- a contradiction in terms. He simply and narrowly thought of the concepts in economic terms failing to realize that they are at root philosophical and in part economic. Had he taken his time to think critically and philosophically analyse the concepts of business and ethics, he could have discovered that there is a logical connection that cannot be denied, between the two, and not a contradiction. Steger’s failure to see the mutual relationship between business and ethics is a clear indication of his misunderstanding of business ethics. His argument therefore remains untenable especially taking into account that ethics embraces good conduct that perpetuates all human institutions, business included.

In refuting Friedman’s argument that the sole responsibility of business is to make profit, Holmes in *Ethics*

before Profit argues that, the main motive of business is not only profit maximization but to encourage hardworking and serve society with high quality goods. For Holmes and indeed so, to say that business' sole responsibility is profiteering would be wrong for there is more to business than profiteering. Wood in *Business and Society*, backs up the same view. He argues that business should responsibly maintain good relationships with its external environment. The concept 'external environment' shows that a business institution is a unique and distinct system with an inside and an outside view. The inside concerns itself with input resources whilst the outside concerns itself with output goods and services. In this sense, the external environment is recipient of the business' material, social, economic and ecological products. Wood thus posits that, "businessmen require an understanding of the role of business in society, its relations with the external environment and the powers and obligations that businessmen have as a result of these roles and relationships"¹¹. Wood can be seen to be arguing that business people have a double edged role, which is to look inside and outside the business world, organizing staff, monitoring production and inquiring into the needs of employees and markets. This will enable them to identify possible external threats to the business and also notice changes in social expectations placed upon them by consumers or the public in general. Such an understanding of what is happening inside and outside the business' boundaries would help business people to meet their responsibilities and use their powers more wisely for the good of both their businesses and the society they serve. It would also help them understanding that in its bid to make profit, business should always be ethical at the same time.

In line with the above contention, Greenwood rightfully argues that:

A businessman should accept responsibility beyond that of profit maximization. He should cleanse himself of self-interest and devote his energy to the improvement of the individuals with whom he comes into conduct¹².

This is not only theoretically sound but also practically correct as immediate pressures of the market have also made it possible for a number of business people to be concerned not only with profits of their firms but with the morality of their business conducts. This invalidates Friedman's remarks that, it is men who are moral and not business corporations. It further shows illogicalities in Friedman's position in so far as he fails to notice that his assertion has the direct implication that business itself should abide by moral codes which guide and control the behaviour of business people. As Friedman himself conceded, business is a human activity. For this reason, it logically follows that business and ethics are compatible especially given that when we are talking of either business or ethics we are at the same time talking of people. We talk of business with no people inside it. Neither can we sensibly talk of ethics with people who are always "driving agents" in this whole story. In fact, if business people are moral persons, how can they disregard morality and still remain moral beings? A philosophical analysis based on simple logic shows that:

Premise 1: Morality refers to the principles by which men in any society live.

Premise 2: Men are prime actors in business.

Conclusion: Therefore, business cannot do without morality.

It is out of this syllogism that our analysis of ethics and business-business ethics- is feasible and that Friedman's argument falls short. One can also point out that, the main problem with Friedman is that he calculates everything that transpires in business in monetary terms neglecting the social aspect of business. Questions which might arise therefore are: "If business just works towards profit making, stifling social relationships, would it survive? Besides, what would be the business of business?" Both questions are testimonies that Friedman's position is null and void.

In responding to the proposed questions, Wright remarks that, "it would be wrong to say that the business of business is business?"¹³, that is, profit maximization alone. For him to say so would be making a circular argument. What Wright is saying is that, profit maximization is not the only goal for business but rather one of the goals. The fact that human beings are social animals who need each other for support and cooperation in order to survive means socialization through moral codes of conduct or ethics is another necessary goal for business to fulfil. This goal of business to observe moral codes of conduct justifies the integration of business and ethics.

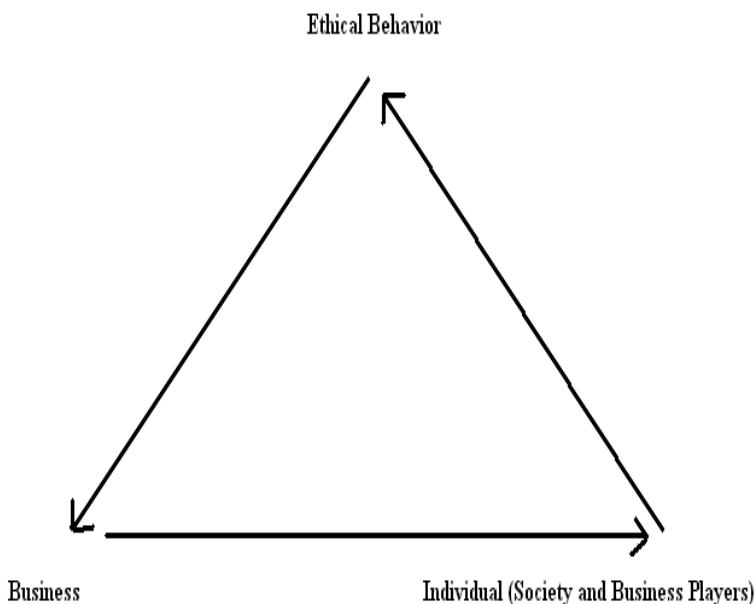
Yet the misunderstanding of business and business ethics by some business people remains a painful testimony that "perfection" in business is still far from reach. No wonder why some scholars have argued that human societies are never perfect as it seems everyone naturally acts to his/her own advantage; hence the need to place restriction to control their behaviour. James Madison advances this line of thinking when he argues that "only a society of perfectly good angels

would not need a government; they would need no morality for they would not have to place restraints on their behaviour as we (humans) do”¹⁴. This stresses Hobbes’ claim that men by nature have egoistic tendencies that disrupt the society on which their life and happiness depend through, among other things, competition for resources, pride and jealousy. If left unchecked, unlike in a society of perfect angels where harmony and peace flourish, these tendencies would result in what Hobbes called a state of war, “such a war as of every man against man. In such conditions, there is no place for industry because the fruit therefore is uncertain and consequently no culture of the earth”¹⁵. This affirms that business and ethics coexist for the survival and good of both business and society being served.

Like Friedman, what Albert Carr thinks of business is dogmatic. In fact, Carr seems to be falling in the trap of his own making. His analogy of business and poker game is unsustainable in that it fails to acknowledge that in any game, be it athletics, football or poker itself; there are referees who act as overseers controlling the proceedings of the game. For these referees to successfully control all rough plays among players, they need to observe certain ethical codes- that which can be referred to as “game ethics”. Also, Carr’s misconception of business has the intolerable implication that “anything goes” in business as long as the participants-business people- are agreed to it irrespective of the potential danger(s) it poses to consumers who obviously have not chosen to be part and parcel of the game of business.

Contrary to Carr is also Trevino who reasons that there is a necessary link between business and ethics. He postulates that, “ethical behaviour in business is that business behaviour which is consistent with the principles, norms and values of business practices that have been agreed upon by societies”¹⁶.

Unlike Carr who fails to see that ethics is a lubricant or caution (to use Adam Smith's language) used to avoid friction between business players, Trevino recognizes a necessary connection between business, individuals and ethics. His argument can be represented by the diagram below:



As illustrated by the diagram above, individuals in business (society and key business players) are obliged to display ethical behaviour in their conduct with others for the common good of both business and society. In this sense, ethical codes are a necessity to control the behaviour of those participating in business. Besides, Carr's analogy of business and poker game denotes his fiasco to draw a solid line of demarcation between animals in a jungle which thrive on nature or instincts and men in a social society who survive

upon rational power. He fails to note that though business people behave immorally sometimes, they remain rational animals in so far as they possess special senses of rationality, consciousness and deliberation. William May in *Ethics and Liberation*, affirms this line of thinking. He argues that morality is exclusively human oriented since human beings are “animals with a difference”¹⁷. The difference he gives is that of the ability of man to think abstractly and reflect on their and others’ behaviour.

Refuting Carr’s position, DeGeorge alludes to almost the same view as May’s adumbrated above. He conceptualize business ethics as “the analysis of presuppositions-both moral presuppositions and the presuppositions from a moral point of view”¹⁸. This assertion has the implication that business ethics is more of an affair of the head than heart. It has the task to raise moral questions about economic systems and studies the practices and values which should be upheld in business institutions for them to remain at par with the society in which they are part. Carr could not see that though business ethics and game ethics are both constituents of general ethics, the two cannot be compared and weighed by the same scale. This is because the former-business- directly involves human needs and life whilst the latter-poker game-involves entertainment. In fact, human life can never be compared with a game, hence Carr misses the point.

Following the preceding debate, the pro-business ethics camp appears more plausible, appealing and compelling especially when considering the increasing public outcry on scandals, corruption, embezzlements and other vices. The Zimbabwe’s 1988 Willowgate Scandal in Harare can support this perspective. Masipula Sithole in *Zimbabwe eroding Authoritarianism* noted that due to insurmountable pressure from the public, President Mugabe set a commission called

“Sandura” to look into the issue. The setting of the commission of inquiry as a result of public outcry is a living testimony that ethics is directly linked to business. It demonstrates that business should always conform to certain moral standards that acceptable to the society it serves. Corruption is considered a vice and not a virtue to the society and business itself. Sithole affirms this when he says:

Anti-corruption demonstration by students and the public in 1988 led Robert Mugabe to establish a commission that investigated improprieties in the release of vehicles by party and government officials apparently abusing a government facility at Willowvale Motor Industry¹⁹.

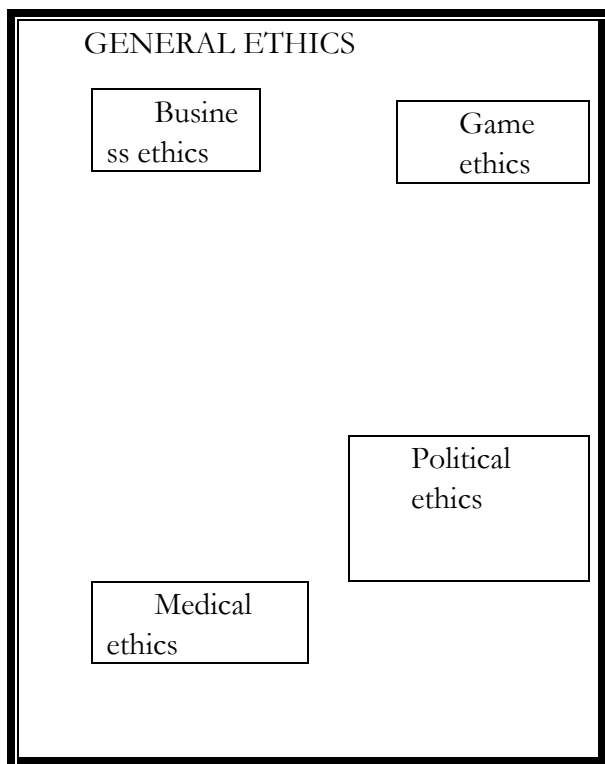
The outcry by both members of the public and morally concerned students on such a corrupt and unethical act is a clear demonstration that business cannot be said to be devoid of ethics. Thus the myth of amoral business as advanced by Friedman, Steger and Carr is a social malaise, a “virus” that ought to be dealt with before it becomes a “tradition” that imposes its impact on business. In other words, it has to be practically understood that business and ethics are coherently unified and it is impossible to separate them. This position can be further buttressed by an analysis of the relationship between business ethics and general ethics below.

The Logical Relationship between Business Ethics and General Ethics

The general connection between business and ethics has been demonstrated and the myth of amoral business put to rest. It is important at this juncture to elaborate the logical relationship between business ethics and general ethics in

order to fully appreciate the general connection adumbrated in the previous sections. Also, this has to be done in order to come up with a wholesome understanding of the relationship between business ethics and general ethics. It should be brought to light whether the relationship is in terms of a venn diagram or of containment or of separation. If the relationship is understood in terms of a venn diagram, which one overlaps the other? If it is of containment, then, we need to ascertain which is the universal set and the subset. On the other hand, if the relationship is of separation we need to understand how the two are separated from each other.

Philosophically speaking, business ethics is widely understood as a constituent part of general ethics which can also be known as practical philosophy. As a special ethic, business ethics among others such as Christian ethics, game ethics and medical ethics, is a sub-set in the whole realm of general ethics. This means that the relationship between business ethics and general ethics is of containment and not overlapping or separation. In other words, business ethics and other branches of practical philosophy are contained in the whole system of general ethics. This can be explicitly shown by the diagram below:



The diagram illustrates that business ethics is a branch of general ethics. The differences in size between diagrams representing business ethics and others in the same realm do not imply differences in terms of importance. Each of the ethics is important in its own right. Also, they all have one thing in common that they have the same source: general ethics. In this sense, a business institution is considered a subsystem of the whole in which it is reinstated. That said, business ethics should always be consistent with the whole system-general ethics, otherwise it would lose its legitimacy and ceases to be part. Bearing this in mind, it will be sheer misunderstanding or rather a categorical mistake to separate business ethics from general ethics. In short, if it is agreed

that business is a constituent of general ethics then it should operate within the parameters of that system in which it is part. This is what Drucker meant when he argued that “there is neither separate ethics for business nor is one needed”²⁰. His argument denotes that all other sectors of business institutions – social, economic, ecological and technological – are regulated by the same ethic-business ethics whose basis is general ethics. Thus business ethics as a sub-system of the whole social system- general ethics-should adhere to the ethics of the whole to which it is part.

Business and Ethics from an African Perspective

In Africa, ethics and business practices have historically been assessed from an African communalism perspective which incidentally is consistent, though not in totality as shall be seen shortly, with the Zimbabwean culture [which is part of the African culture]. African culture whose basis is African communalism is succinctly captured in Mbiti’s dictum on Africans which says: “I am because we are and since we are therefore I am”²¹ and this is characterized by a spirit of love, sharing and harmony. Transposing Mbiti’s sentiments to business, they can be argued to mean the interdependence between business and the community it serves and in which it is situated. If business is to exist, then there should be a community to serve, of course at a fair price. Where there is no community to serve, there is no business. At the same time, human society’s largely depends on business in one way or another for it to flourish. An important need to be emphasized, however, is that even where society exists but prices are unfair, there will be little or no business and where society exists, but there is no business, life is difficult or rather impossible. This serves to indicate that both business

people and the society should respectively observe certain values if their businesses and society are to flourish. Thus as African communalism demands not only business people are obliged to ethical in their conducts but everyone in the society.

In Africa, business actions are also assessed from both utilitarian calculations and a consequentialist approach whereby an action whose consequences are overall beneficial to the greatest number of people offered by it is rationalized as ethical. In Africa, though the idea of utilitarianism has been in use since time immemorial as implied in African communalism elaborated above, its main historical and philosophical thrust today comes to us through John Stewart Mill. Mill (1808-1873) popularized utilitarianism and like his predecessors and indeed African communalism, the basis of his version of utilitarianism is the Greatest Happiness Principle that states that “actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness”²². As such, our actions ought to be geared towards promoting the general good for everyone. This is tantamount to saying the cocktail of losses that might await a morally upright business person are in utilitarian terms, morally insignificant compared to the maximization of net happiness for the greatest number of people affected by that action. Utilitarianism is justified on the grounds that it seeks to promote the well-being of the majority (the public).

While to a greater extend, the idea of business and business practices in Africa have historically been assessed from an African communalism perspective, some of the business systems encouraged in many societies today are inconsistent with the African experiences in general. The principles of a democratic economic system encouraged in

modern societies are a case in point. The incompatibility of these principles with the African experiences is a result of the controversy surrounding the concept of democracy itself. Democracy understood as a rule by the people, which is normally the majority and not an individual [king or chief as African communalism would want] means a democratic economy in actual essence is not compatible with the African experiences. Also, the concept of democracy is heavily rooted in the politics of liberalism which is alien to; not only Africa's politico-existential experiences. It is also eccentric to the conception of the human person that is found in the African culture in general where the "individual being" is always viewed and understood from a communitarian perspective, rather than the individually existing ontological being with only reason, will and desire. It is this element that makes critics of democracy as it is applied to business argue that democracy is sometimes an injury to individual liberties of both the minority and the majority as well. Because democratic principles are rooted in the philosophy of liberalism it is almost always very difficult for it to fit well in African societies that are inherently communitarian like Zimbabwe. In general, the question of feasibility is also an obstacle to the democratization of Zimbabwe and African economies at large hence the need to revisit certain social, cultural as well as economic factors that characterized traditional African societies. That said, there is no consensus on whether democracy and in particular a democratic economy is compatible with the Zimbabwean or even African experiences in general. Thus while democracy is commonly viewed as a precondition for Africa's development, African philosophers like Wamba-dia-Wamba²³ challenge us to consider the question of whether democracy can be considered as *African* or as alien to Africa. Similarly, in his

speech on the 15th of September 2008's official signing ceremony of the Memorandum of Understanding between Z.A.N.U P.F and the two M.D.C formations, Robert Mugabe, one of the main political players in post-independence Zimbabwe's political field echoed the sentiment that "democracy is a very different proposition"²⁴ for not only Zimbabwe, but the whole of the African continent. He implied that sometimes, certain principles of liberal democracy may not be compatible with the African value system. Economically speaking, by and large, the African societies generally give ontological priority to society, and not the individual, hence it may be very difficult, if not impossible to instil free thinking, open-mindedness and a culture of tolerance as virtues of freedom that is enshrined in a democratic economic system. Rather, viewed from an African communitarian perspective, democracy tends to be atomistic in terms of it promoting the welfare of the individual at the expense of the society. This is contrary to the African understanding of the individual as seen by John Mbiti as he argued that for Africans, "whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual. The individual can only say 'I am because we are; and since we are, therefore I am'"²⁵. Thus, scepticism still characterizes the aspect of democracy, especially a democratic economy in the light of the philosophy of liberalism which is one of the cornerstones of democracy and its compatibility with African traditional business ethical values. Normally, individual freedom; expressed through other liberties like that of expression, speech, movement, association, equality, justice and the promotion of individual human rights are considered to be the pillars of a viable system of liberal democracy that can also lead to a viable democratic economy. However, as

has been highlighted, an analysis of the metaphysical constitution of the Zimbabwean and African society at large proves that it may be very difficult to cultivate all these virtues of democracy without compromising on the Zimbabwean and African socio-political value system. Yet this is not to say that democracy is un-African or rather intrinsically alien to African people and their traditional economic and political systems as a form of democracy known as ‘non-party consensual democracy’ was the political principle around which life and business evolved since time immemorial. Basically, decisions in traditional African societies were based on agreement and consensus between parties/members of the society. According to Serge and Doise consensus is “when people seek to associate together, act in consent and make decisions”²⁶ and has always been the fundamental element of African traditional democracy in both politics and business. Consensus, as a basis for a non-party consensual democracy has always had the advantage that it explores various conflicting viewpoints and possibilities from all constituent members involved with the motive to direct the views towards an entente that would be welcome to all.

We will not stretch the discussion on business and ethics from an African perspective any further here. We will revisit the topic in the ensuing chapters. Up to this end we only wanted to show the general conceptions of business and ethics from the traditional Zimbabwean and or African perspectives. Let us therefore turn on to a topic closer to the one we have been discussing here: “The nature of business and business ethics in Zimbabwe”.

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Chapter Three

The Nature of Business and Business Ethics in Zimbabwe

As noted by Fieser and rightly so, businesses have moral obligations beyond what the law sometimes requires¹. This is to say business personnel are expected to be unscrupulous and not to be driven by the sole need for personal aggrandizement. They should act as gatekeepers of business ethical practices by considering and putting on the fore customers' values, interests and needs. Whilst this is the ideal, it is contrary to the business reality in Zimbabwe and elsewhere in Africa where some economic principles being encouraged by developed economies in the business landscape in Africa today, seem to be incompatible with the African experiences in general. This is one reason, among many others, that businesses in Zimbabwe like elsewhere in Africa are marred with business immoral practices. In order to proceed, let us examine the immoral business practices pervasive in the Zimbabwean business landscape.

Immoral Practices in Zimbabwean Business

Besides the common business immoral practices that have been known in Zimbabwe for decades now, parallel market has manifested itself in the recent times. It is characterized by numerous immoral business practices, others new to the Zimbabwean business terrain. These include profiteering, bribery and the proliferation of substandard consumer goods such as cheap plastic ware, overpricing, misinformation and corruption. With regard to the latter – corruption- all businesses ranging from small to the large

ones have been hard heated by the evil. In fact, corruption has turned to be the most serious unethical business practice today in Zimbabwe and the world-over. Corruption can be defined as “the misuse of entrusted power for private gain”². This means corruption entails the abuse of public office for private benefit. It includes bribery, extortion and other acts of misconduct like fraud and embezzlement. In terms of consequences to the “public coffers” or the government, corruption can lead to wasteful government spending, and can have a detrimental effect on national economic growth and development. This is because corruption by government officials always entails unilateral and collective abuses by public officials (e.g. embezzlement, nepotism) as it links up private and public sectors through bribery, extortion, and fraud³. Corruption, therefore, is related to the performance associated with a public office, and deviations from laws and procedures that regulate the conduct of public servants. As Ayittey⁴ observed, since political independence, the twin evils of gross mismanagement of national economies and looting of national treasuries for deposit in European and offshore bank accounts became the trend in much of Africa. This observation has also been authenticated by the then president of the World Bank, Paul Wolfowitz⁵ who in October 2006 disclosed that Nigerian officials had stolen more than \$300 billion of their nation’s wealth over the last forty years, though the problem is not confined to a few bad apples. Neither is it confined to Nigeria alone, but Africa in general, Zimbabwe included. As Chabal and Daloz put it:

Corruption is not just endemic but an integral part of the social fabric of life. For those at the bottom end of society, like lowly civil servants, the sale of the limited

amount of power they possess is virtually their only means of survival. Higher up, extortion is one of the major avenues of enrichment; it facilitates social advancement and the upholding of one's position... it enables the political elites to fulfil their duties, to meet the expectations of their clients and, hence, to enhance their status⁶.

Estimates of the cost of corruption to Africa are a window on the seriousness of the problem. The African Union⁷ in September 2002 estimated that corruption costs African economies more than \$148 billion a year. Though most corrupt individuals believe that corruption is beneficial to both the individual and his country, what remains a truism in economic terms is that the cost of corruption is not limited to sums of money lost but also costs of retarded development and increased inequalities, which are far more difficult to quantify. Thus, whichever way one looks at corruption, the latter has grave consequences for Africa in general and the particular countries of the corrupt members. According to Transparency International⁸, economically, corruption contributes adversely to the depletion of African countries' national wealth. As one African country, Zimbabwe has also been affected by the same evil-corruption- not only as an economic devil but a morally disturbing monster. In realization of this truism, Tonderai Munakiri had this to say of Zimbabwe:

Economic and political commentators have proffered varied reasons why Zimbabwe is caught up in an economic recession never seen before. While the reasons are indeed many; there is no doubting that Zimbabwe has

collapsed because of unprecedented corruption in all facets of our society⁹.

Though the causes of corruption are not clear, some saying it's poor governance and others say it is poor economic policies, what has remained clear and undisputable is the fact that corruption has permeated almost every fabric of society in many countries especially in Africa south of the Sahara. Besides, corruption has become the root cause of intractable poverty and underdevelopment in Africa as it distorts competition and fair market structures and, consequently, deters both local and foreign domestic investment. This is because corruption undermines people's social trust in the political system, its institutions and leadership. In short, it corrodes and damages the social fabric of society. As Mojtabal argues:

Corruption creates a culture of self service and disregard for the situations of others. With the infiltration of corruption to every aspect of society, from education to the economy, corrupted civil servants makes it difficult, if not impossible, for the already impoverished African population to escape their undesirable situations¹⁰.

This means the tantalizing levels at which corruption is spreading in the African and in particular the Zimbabwean business landscape is an economic and moral cause of concern; it has drastic effects to the country's social relations with the international community and consequently to the national economy. This is a worrying and painful reality to contemplate, yet does not mean the intractable corruption pestilence cannot be contained and stemmed if the country is determined to do so. To combat this pernicious problem-

corruption- would require putting in place appropriate anti-corruption and legal machinery; and prosecute, without fear or favour, violators of public service codes of conduct. The very low incidence of corruption by the governing elites in countries like New Zealand, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Switzerland, Iceland, and the Netherlands is present evidence that corruption can be contained if the government becomes fully determined to do so.

With regard to the use of plastics by the Zimbabwe manufacturing industry, it can be argued that while this may be cheaper in most cases than steel or aluminium, the use of fairly cheap plastic parts where steel or aluminium has to be used compromises durability. This poses a moral dilemma for the manufacturer in a crumbling economy which is often under pressure to cut corners on quality in order to survive.

The use of plastic (in place of metal or aluminium) parts may constitute a short term solution, but in the long run the moral problem that the manufacturer faces is responsibility to the customer even if the prices are reduced. This is because from a moral standpoint, “goods produced should serve their purpose in accordance with perfect virtue”¹¹. Virtue (*arête*) as understood by Aristotle is a habit or quality of the soul that allows the bearer to succeed at his or her purpose¹². In the context of business conduct, the virtue of a business person is to be ethically responsible for his/her actions. An “anything goes in businesses,” attitude and the ‘dog eat dog’ mentality thus should never have a legitimate place whatsoever in business. This is because where ethics are denied access to mingle with elements of consumerism such as production, business grinds to a halt as the served customers are likely to desert. This is so because in such cases consumers have a general tendency to shift attention to other manufacturers with better products and/or services.

Other immoral business practices that have infiltrated the Zimbabwean business scene at a morally disturbing magnitude include misinforming, coercing, cunning, deception and other such 'vices' associated with advertising. These practices have manifested at an increasingly alarming rate invoking the wrath of critics to urge consumers to be vigilant and call for the banning of advertising in Zimbabwe. With regard to problems associated with advertising, scholars like Norris has urged that "the advertiser should tell the whole truth about the product he wants to sell and should judge the message not by what it says but by what the reader is most likely to think it says"¹³. Advertisers should not manipulate or influence the consumer in one way or another to buy the product/service. The consumer should decide on his/her own whether or not to buy the product.

From this discussion, it is evident that, by and large, businesses in Zimbabwe no longer have deep-rooted concern for the society it serves, that is, to the suffering and desperate customers across the country. As already highlighted, the "black market," for example, has entrenched itself in the country to the extent of overtaking the formal market. On the other hand, the consumer and related watchdogs responsible for monitoring and ensuring public safety have been rendered toothless. Today, it is the business people that have taken on the responsibility of controlling the prices of goods. Shortages have resulted in the emergence of the phenomenon of a "sellers' market" with skyrocketing prices changing on a daily basis. These immoral practices by business people have hit the poor in Zimbabwe the hardest. As such, the immoral business practices pervasive in the Zimbabwe's business world cannot continue unchallenged; there is need to call upon key players in business to re-examine their business practices. Yet we still need to further examine immoral

business practices pervasive in Zimbabwe's business world by separately looking at business activities and practices by both the government and small-large scale businesses. Let us start with the former.

Immoral Business Practices by Zimbabwean Government and Parastatals

The Zimbabwean government is heavily involved in the economy in that it owns a number of parastatals in the country. Besides, it has significant claims in privately owned entities. These parastatals which are run by government officials in the name of the government are also reeling from deep-seated corruption and corporate malpractices.

While the political and economic challenges facing Zimbabwe are essentially to blame for the immoral business practices obtaining in the country, the misunderstanding of business ethics by some government officials who though learned have never had the privilege to study ethics has also played a role. As a matter of consequence, many government companies by design or default continue to operate without adherence to business ethics. Immoral business practices like corruption, bribery and embezzlement occur with impunity within the government run organizations. In this light, it is my conviction that the central government might be reluctant to reign in on corporate misdeeds or form of immoral business practices like corruption because it [through government officials] is also, in one way or another, responsible for the corruption and the attendant economic decay that has engulfed the country.

Some political and economic analysts have come to think that the unethical culture in Zimbabwe business landscape is perhaps a result of the limited capacity of consumer watch

dogs such as the Consumer Council of Zimbabwe (CCZ), to investigative players both within and without government circles, in an effort to stem out corruption, sensitize people on good ethical conducts and oust the 'myth of amoral business' from the business landscape. As such, corruption among business people doing business on behalf of the government has become a cobweb that has entangled Zimbabweans both within and without the business sector by design or by default. Some officials in parastatals and government authorities from state owned business institutions such as Noczim Oil Company, Harare City Council, Grain Marketing Board and Zimbabwe Passengers Company (ZUPCO), Central Bank of Zimbabwe (CBZ), Ministry of Mining and Natural Resources among others have in recent times, allegedly been involved in corrupt activities of immense proportions. This is a clear testimony that Zimbabwe's business malpractices are on a meteoric rise. Concerned with this painfully reality, Munakiri rightfully depicts the reluctance of Zimbabwe government to seriously deal with reported immoral business cases as a major contributing factor to the rise. To substantiate this position, he cites the L.G Smith Report of 1984 and thus said:

The L.G Smith Report of 1984 categorically stated that parastatals were posting losses year in year out because of endemic corruption. The Report which was compiled by former Judge Smith, notes that patron-client relationships, Board compositions and the absence of meritocracy in the hiring procedures were some of the root causes of annual losses. While this report was compiled as far back as 1984, one wonders why nothing has been done about the findings of the Smith Commission. This again is a clear demonstration of the

little political will to tackle corruption. This is because 22 years have gone by since this report was presented to government. It is disheartening to learn that parastatals with monopolies in their different sectors continue to post losses year in year out. It is further disillusioning to the taxpayers who have to bail them out of debt through their tax dollars each time they are said to be on the brink of collapse¹⁴.

In addition, Munakiri cites the ZUPCO saga, which has proven beyond doubt the common saying that “justice delayed is justice denied”. A year or so after its revelations, the case is still in the courts of law thereby not only delaying the taxpayers their justice but denying them it. This comes very clear in Munakiri’s writings when he comments that:

The ZUPCO saga is still in the courts and taxpayers must be relieved that the company’s chairman was incarcerated for his deeds. The punishment that was meted out on Charles Nherera, we all hope, will be a deterrent to future chairmen and board members of this parastatal. Additionally, we hope that the current investigations will help close all the loopholes and gaps that have been exploited by government officials to siphon funds from this company. In addition, it is disturbing that ZUPCO has been run like a personal company by some government officials, i.e. we recently learnt that a Cabinet Minister purchased a US\$77 000 vehicle for personal use from ZUPCO coffers. We all hope that investigations into this allegation will be concluded and taxpayers told the truth¹⁵.

It is in view of business misconducts such as the above that scholars like Skooglund¹⁶ (cited by Trevino and Nelson) asserts the importance of ethics in all humanity's daily endeavours and conducts with business and life in general. For him and indeed so, an unethical person is very difficult to conduct business with in that one cannot risk trusting him and the commitments and promises he makes. Business is only possible if the ones who engage in it do so in a manner that shows respect for the well-being of partners, clients and the society at large. These heightened levels of business misconducts especially by government authorities who should be custodians of law are likely to result in foreign investors losing faith and confidence in doing business with Zimbabwe. They are also likely to result in Zimbabweans losing faith and confidence in business people in general [both in public and private sector] as is now the culture with politicians. This is because corruption has not become an evil in government owned business alone but in private owned businesses. This is substantiated by Munakiri who laments over immoral business practices in the country's private sector, particularly the ENG Asset Management. He comments:

The Watyoka and Muponda saga at ENG Asset Management is one that we are all familiar with. Only the heavens know what the two gentlemen did with investors' funds. The few banks that ended up closing shop, we are told, were all thriving on misappropriating clients' funds. One wonders how much corruption goes unreported and unnoticed in the private sector today. From the foregoing, corruption has become endemic, none of us is immune. It has become the order of our society and it is especially fuelled by the current scarcities in fuel and basic commodities. In an environment where nothing is readily

available, that becomes a groundswell for corruption. In an economy where red tape and procedures are not properly defined, corruption rides roughshod. But can behaviour be legislated?¹⁷

The ubiquity and depth of corrupt tendencies, among other immoral business practices in Zimbabwe-both in the public and private sector, has thus become so institutionalized in the country that very few people can still claim to be paragons of moral rectitude to the extent of being able to stand up and challenge the myth of amoral business and crack the moral whip against perpetrators of business immoralities who are in their midst. Yet corruption and other forms of immoral business practices that are a common feature of many national economies ought to be contained in order to ensure a stable and just social order where consumer rights are given the moral weight that they warrant. With the inclusion of government officials in the “mess” – immoral business practices – the efforts of Zimbabwe’s monetary authorities to stamp and tame corruption monster and other such immoral business practices come to naught and the question of business ethics in the country even more complex and controversial than most people would like to believe. More so, this has resulted in the inefficiencies on the part of the government, Standard Association of Zimbabwe (SAZ) and Consumer Council of Zimbabwe (CCZ) to deal with immoral business practices like low quality products that have flooded the market in a morally disturbing magnitude. The product are both local and from abroad-as far as China. The loss of duty by the Zimbabwean government, the SAZ and CCZ, among other such organizations is a cause of moral and economic concern to the well-being of Zimbabweans, both within and those in the Diaspora. Immanuel Kant is one such

deontologist philosopher who regarded acting out of a sense of duty as the basis of morality in all human life spheres, business included. He is believed to be “the first philosopher to put duty at the very centre of ethics”¹⁸. Traditionally, duty refers to the requirements imposed on a person by his occupancy of a particular position or office in an organization or society. The government, SAZ and CCZ have the duty to be at the forefront in monitoring the quality and safety of products that are marketed in Zimbabwe so as to protect the consumer’s well-being from fraudulent business practices. Thus for Kant and rightly so, the upsurge in immoral business practices in the present day Zimbabwe that are primarily driven by personal success or profit motive not only disapprove of the maximization of profits by immoral means, but also the instrumental role played by immoral business practices as well as moral and illegitimate failure by the government, SAZ and CCZ to execute their duty of protecting and serving the public. It is in view of this, therefore, that I argue for ethics to be at the very centre of business dealings in Zimbabwe’s business people, both in government and the private sector. In the same vein, scholars like Vin Sarni¹⁹ believe that our lives should be grounded and led by a code of ethics and not law alone. He rejects law as the sole and wholly sufficient standard, which guides and determines human conduct as some people [like government officials] have a tendency of putting the law in their hands. For him and indeed so, ethics and law should complement each other in order to bring about a society that abides by and respect moral and legal codes.

Small – Large Scale Businesses in Zimbabwe

The fact that there are celebrated anti-trust cases world-wide against small and major producing industries highlight the existence of moral problems associated with such egoistic tendencies as espoused by Hobbes when he advocates psychological egoism and argues that “one ought to serve his own interests because he can do nothing else”²⁰. This philosophy has not been without criticism since the time of Hobbes. The continued existence of ethical egoism, amongst others such unethical business practices, in Zimbabwe’s business landscape is a clear testimony that there is still serious ethical crisis in all levels of the business sector- from production to advertising and selling of goods. Instances to substantiate this contention are many. Several consumers in Zimbabwe have complained and registered their concerns through the media on the kind of steel now being used to make wheelbarrows by the Zimbabwe Monarch Industry which is allegedly believed to be less durable as purported by the industry through adverts. From consumers’ experiences, the Monarchy product now has a shorter life span than the product they produced a decade or so ago when Zimbabwe’s economy was still promising and blooming. The wide use of low quality material by small-large manufacturers in consumer goods such as plastics is another case in point. It is crystal clear that the use of “cheap” plastics material is cheaper in most cases than steel, aluminium and other durable material. On the other hand, a high quality durable plastic is often as expensive or nearly so, as a metal produce. Because of this, many parts of appliances, automobiles, toys and containers are produced with fairly cheap plastic. Considerable evidence has accumulated in the production of washing buckets and plastic cups. As noted earlier on, in the Zimbabwe business

landscape this kind of situation is being aggravated by the proliferation of substandard products on the Zimbabwean market that include clothes and electrical gadgets that are being imported from the Chinese manufactures/producers without government doing its duty of quality control. Worse still, the retail shops that sell these products do not inform consumers about the structural defects and short life span of these products perhaps for the sake of “business prudence”. Informing consumers about the defects and short life span of these goods might lead to a serious slump in the fortunes of the business organization. Hence, sellers of these products opt to remain silent about the shortcomings of their products. Though consumers seriously feel short changed because they are not informed of the product’s defect and are charged exorbitant prices that are not commensurate with the quality and life span of the products they buy, the crippling economic situation facing most Zimbabweans have left them with little or no choice but to go for these poor quality goods. The few high quality goods on the market are far beyond the reach of most ordinary Zimbabweans. On the other hand, the parallel market has dominated the formal market, and as a result considerations of exchange value and nature of products are no longer an issue.

It is in the light of these immoral business practices that one can safely argue that the modern day Zimbabwe’s business world is now ruled by the primitive rules of “caveat emptor,” that is, “buyers beware” and “anything goes”. This is to say that business-wise, Zimbabwe has deteriorated to the primitive times where survival of the fittest was the order of the day. Yet for prices of goods to be considered ‘just’ and business attain a modicum of respect, there has to be harmony between the economic value of what is supplied by the seller and the amount paid for the goods by the buyer.

Affirming this notion, theologians have insisted that “goods should be sold for a just or generally ‘affordable’ prices for men are destined to live together in society”²¹. In his principle of selling, Aquinas (cited in Witternberger) described any sale as “unlawful if a defect in the product sold is not disclosed to the buyer by the seller”²². Thus with regard to pricing, what is ideal is the normal rate of interest and an ordered interaction between supply and demand in the market that should be used as a guide for pricing. Such duly competitive market conditions make the forces of supply and demand to push prices towards a natural equilibrium level which covers both social and economic dimensions. In turn, this will naturally make prices morally just since the market will be sufficiently competitive to make it fully responsive to conditions of supply and demand.

This relates with Munyaradzi Mawere’s²³ observation that businesses should always be in harmony with the values of the society they serves; they [businesses] should cherish truth to the extent that they disclose the whole truth about the product they intent to sell to customers and sell the goods at “reasonable” price. The business people, and in particular advertisers, thus should let the customer “judge the message not by what it says but by what s/he is most likely to think it says”²⁴. For Mawere as Norris, “business is supposed to be unscrupulous and not driven by the sole need for profit maximization. Instead, it should uphold the values, interests and needs of the people it is serving.”²⁵ The manifestation of numerous Zimbabwean businesses with ‘ugly faces’ of immoral practices like overpricing/overcharging, corruption, psychological coercion, misinforming, cunning, exaggerated competence/deception, provision of exaggerated guarantees, use of hyperbole and false testimonials in the mainstream advertising of products is therefore unjust and morally

unacceptable. It is pertinent therefore, for the Zimbabwean business people to appreciate that business is defined in terms of both society and profiteering, and not solely in terms of the profit motive. It is incumbent upon each operator to integrate an ethical culture (business ethics) in his business concern.

It should be remarked, however, that the nature of business and business ethics in Zimbabwe paraded above cannot be denied from its political and socio-economic experiences since the country's national independence in 1980. In fact, Zimbabwean business ethics and business or rather economy since 1980 has been a reflection of what is happening on the political ground. This has been such for the simple reason that Zimbabwe has never had a totally liberalized economy since 1980. A command economy has always been operative such that national politics has ever since dictated the direction to which the country's economy should take. Levitt rightly notes that "capitalism as we like it can thrive only in an environment of political democracy and personal freedom. These require a pluralistic society where there is division and not centralization of power; variety, not unanimity, social, and spiritual function."²⁶ This is why it can be argued that economic despotism in the form of a command economic system is, to some extent, a reflection of a country's political dictatorship. A political dictatorship would almost always extend its dictatorial tendencies to the running of the economy in the form of mechanisms like price controls, poor economic policies and the dictating, by politicians, of what those running the national economy (economists) should do. All these facts substantiate the thesis that to understand the nature of Zimbabwe's business and business ethics, there is also need to understand its political outlook. That said, the next chapter will examine the political

and socio-economic experiences of Zimbabwe since her independence from Britain in 1980 up to the time when the GNU was formed in 2009.

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Chapter Four

The Political and Socio-Economic Experiences of Zimbabwe since Independence, 1980

In Zimbabwe as in many countries throughout the world, national politics has always been central in either building or destructing the national economy. This is to say political decisions and events in Zimbabwe have always had an impact, directly or otherwise, to the country's economy. As such, it is paramount to trace the developments in Zimbabwe's business landscape along with their historical epochs right from the period the country earned its political independence from Britain (18 April 1980) to date.

Zimbabwe's Politics and Socio-economic Situation Between 1980 and 2000

At Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, diversified economy like elsewhere in the then politically independent states was touted as a beacon for the country's future. This economic policy was not only promising but exuded with signs of vibrancy that made Zimbabwe's economy viewed as the emerging economic giant of Southern Africa.

However, little did the post-colonial Zimbabwe government new that the economy it had inherited from the colonial master, though promising if properly managed was fragile to the extent that it could be jeopardized by any slight political or economic mismanagement and miscalculations. It was an economy that required no rushing but political courtesy, calculations and maturity. This is because by sub-Saharan African standards Zimbabwe at independence inherited not only a relatively sophisticated and diversified

economy, but an economy already suffered from a large fiscal deficit, low economic performance, high unemployment, price controls, and a lack of foreign currency. Zimbabwe's economy was also heavily subsidized (mainly by South Africa) during the Smith regime that was under economic sanctions. It led to a relatively self-sufficient economy, which after independence and liberalization of the economy and loss of subsidy, became unsustainable¹. It is from this understanding that Edgar Tekere once commented that:

The economic downturn that post-colonial Zimbabwe has suffered can also be attributed to the inheritance, at independence in 1980, of an economy that was reeling from United Nations imposed sanctions, flawed and half-based implementation of economic policies that the ZANU (PF) government adopted since 1980. After the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) by the Smith regime in 1965 Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) made history for the wrong reasons by becoming the first country in world history to be subjected to United Nations economic sanctions that completely imposed a ban on key imports and exports².

This line of thinking is supported by scholars like Tarisayi who has this to say:

The cataclysmic meltdown of Zimbabwe economy since the turn of the new millennium cannot be legitimately divorced from the prevailing political undercurrents since independence from white colonial settler rule in 1980³.

In light of this observation, one can argue that the colonial settlers' morally scandalous stranglehold on the

economy precipitated with the land resource control worsened the fragmentation of Rhodesia along racial lines. Consequently, such unjustified resource disequilibria between colonial settlers and the indigenous people of Zimbabwe has always been foremost objective of Zimbabwe's war of liberation and has persisted to be so long after independence in 1980.

While this political and economic misfortune that befell the then Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) was a historical event of the time, it remained a prophetic message to the present day Zimbabwe fulfilling the historical dictum that "history repeats itself". This is because the political squalors and economic turmoil that the Smith regime experienced after the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965 began to re-unfold once again after the country's political independence from Britain.

To begin with, the Lancaster House Constitution (LHC), initially the Lancaster House Agreement was put in place as part of the deal between Zimbabwe's liberation movements and the colonial government in 1979. This deal which was brokered by Britain at the Lancaster House conference, involved a number of compromises over, among others, majority rights and the land resource ownership in the country. Such a deal unfortunately "...protected the existing authoritarian bureaucracy and protected private property, thus limiting the scope of distribution"⁴ thereby extending, for a decade, colonial consolidation of their wealth as well as resource distribution disequilibria. The willing-buyer and willing-seller clause in the Lancaster House Constitution effectively prevented the government of Zimbabwe to implement meaningful land reform programme immediate after independence. This constitutionally guaranteed racial protection of the land resource meant that one of the key

objectives of the struggle for liberation –land-remained on hold at least for the first ten years after independence.

However, the advent of independence ushered in new hopes and aspirations particularly within the ranks of the indigenous black people of Zimbabwe given close to a century of colonial subjugation. Similarly, the white population felt a sense of security and belonging when the incoming Prime Minister, Robert Mugabe, preached the gospel of nation-building predicated on reconciliation between past political protagonists, a promise that he failed to live to. Raftopoulos and Mlambo quoted Mugabe in 1980 as saying:

Henceforth you and I must strive to adapt ourselves, intellectually and spiritually, to the reality of our political change and relate to each other as brothers bound one to the other by a bond of comradeship. If yesterday I fought you as an enemy, today you have become my friend and ally with the same national interests, loyalty, rights and duties as myself. If yesterday you hated me, today you cannot avoid the love that binds you to me and me to you. Is it not folly, therefore, that in these circumstances anybody should seek to revive the wounds and grievances of the past? The wrongs of the past must stand forgiven and forgotten⁵.

This “gospel” of reconciliation from the new government of the independent Zimbabwe though promotes overwhelming political irresponsibility and bad governance in political leaders, it was noble enough to give confidence to the international world leading to relatively improved economic performance buoyed by investors, lenders and donors’ confidence in the new political dispensation in the

country. The international community and International Monetary Fund (IMF), thus viewed the new government as a politically and economically responsible one to the extent that they were willing help Zimbabwe in cash or kind to revamp its economy. This smooth running of the economy went through the 1980.

However, it was not long before the beginning of trouble in the country. Zimbabwe's flirtation with socialist economic policies which the Western governments were totally against saw the national economy contracting to the extent that the Bretton Woods institutions recommended for a compressive realignment of the economy through the market driven Economic Structural Reform Programme (ESAP). The latter was implemented beginning 1991 to end in 1996. The main targets of this market driven programme were:

To achieve GDP growth of 5 per cent during 1991-95, raise savings to 25 per cent of GDP, raise investment to 25 per cent of GDP, achieve export growth of 9 per cent annum, reduce the budget deficit from over 10 per cent of GDP to 5 per cent by 1995 [and] reduce inflation from 17.7 per cent to 10 per cent by 1995⁶.

In a move that was meant to achieve these key targets, the country set out to liberalize the economy, a process whereby, by and large, price controls, subsidies and a number of other regulations were rescinded. However, the government failed to fully implement the policy in so far as it could not:

- 1) Stabilise its accounts, and
- 2) Reduce public spending thereof as recommended by the IMF leading to the suspension of disbursement of fund

under the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) in September 1995⁷.

The failure by Zimbabwe to abide by the recommendations of the market based reforms of the IMF thus had serious economic ramifications to Zimbabwe. Besides the two consequences given above, the failure to abide by IMF based reforms tarnished her relations with the international community resulting in lack of trust to the Zimbabwean government and in ESAP denied funding by the IMF.

Besides Zimbabwe's failure to adhere to fiscal discipline as prescribed by the IMF, ESAP and its successor, Zimbabwe Programme for Economic Transformation (ZIMPREST)⁸ had other hitches even more troublesome. These economic reforms saw a large number of Zimbabwe's labour force being retrenched from the job market. This was done as a way through which the ailing parastatals and business organizations in the private sector could streamline their operations in order to remain viable in the newly introduced economic environment predicated on the free market system. The scepticism and lack of will power on the part of the Zimbabwean government to fully implement and go through the trials and tribulations of these economic reforms thus rendered ESAP and ZIMPREST's key economic targets and forecasts realistically beyond reach and therefore impossible to achieve. To the Zimbabwean government, the consequences were hard to bear as most of them were a surprise to the government. For example, little did the government of Zimbabwe know that ESAP and ZIMPREST would result in mass retrenchment of workers, a move that would in turn burden the government itself in many respects. As a matter of consequence, the Zimbabwean government

shifted the blame to the 'West' as having cheated the country to engage in such 'precarious' economic reforms. The economic reform-induced retrenchments of labour that were meant to reduce labour-related expenditure in corporate organizations through retention of a small but very productive labour force was economically noble. However, such as move condemned a large chunk of the formerly employed people to the streets where they had to, among others things, start up their own informal small business ventures to sustain themselves and their families, the kind of business widely known as "black-market" or 'parallel market'⁹. Others engaged in various dealings like cross-border trading, clubs, small poultry projects and other self-job enterprises most of which were simply survival strategies that could only allow them to earn a hand to mouth life. The new economic environment created by the aforesaid economic reforms was never friendly to the general populace of Zimbabwe as the 'new' law of supply and demand not only determined the worth of one's labour but also the quantity of labour required to run various economic institutions in the country. In such a harsh economic environment in which the market forces determined the worth of commodities as opposed to the socialist economic order prior to the implementation of Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) in Zimbabwe, life outside formal employment turned out to be not only risky but also a mortal combat where the fittest survived and the weak ones languished in abject poverty as the so-called "black market" was steadily taking roots. It is at this point that Zimbabwe's business ethics died its natural death and the so-called "the myth of amoral business" successfully penetrated into the country's business world.

As if nature itself was supportive of the emerging Zimbabwean economic problems, especially that of high unemployment rate, the devastating drought of 1991/92 that ravaged the country also contributed to the downfall of Zimbabwe's national economy. It is in the context of this devastating drought that the Zimbabwean economic situation begun to vividly show various forms of morally questionable business activities ranging from bribery, kickbacks, embezzlements, overpricing, misinformation and other forms of corruption. These immoral business practices were indeed a new challenge to the government's efforts to turn around the economy and put it back on track. For Gideon Gono "corruption is one among a number of disturbing vices that have stifled efforts to turnaround Zimbabwe's fragile economy"¹⁰. Shortages of commodities on the formal market breeds corrupt activities as majority would be vying for the scarce commodities. In such a situation, it becomes inevitable for those in business to find means to screen people who could benefit from the scarce commodities. Corruption is one such means. A command economic system breeds bottlenecks in the supply of commodities because business organizations are unwilling to produce and sell goods at controlled prices that are normally below market value and therefore uneconomical. Those who continue producing under these harsh economic conditions may decide to export their finished goods or sell them on the black market where prices of commodities reflect their real worth. Thus corruption is unavoidable as shortages of commodities bring about unfair trade practices where the moneyed and well-connected get the scarce commodities or individuals use bribes in order to access those commodities that are in short supply¹¹. As a result, corruption creeps into the supply and

distribution of commodities as people try to take advantage of an economy in a state of crisis.

Adding salt to an already bleeding injury-an economy that was already down falling, the Zimbabwean government mistakenly offered veterans of the liberation war for independence unbudgeted gratuities on a “black Friday”¹² on 14 November 1997, a move that is allegedly said to quell the veterans’ uprising as the latter were beginning to critically question the “fruits” of the liberation struggle especially the land issue. Land has always one of the focal points for fighting White colonialism yet almost two decades later there was little sign that anything good would come out for them. For the war veterans, this was no longer the colonial problem but a betrayal by the fellow black leadership-the government. Thus to quell them, the war veterans were granted a one-off cash payment, a life-time monthly pension, a sizable percentage of all newly acquired land for resettlement, medical cover and funding of the veterans’ education and their dependents. This ‘blind move’ had indelible damages to the Zimbabwean economy. The Zimbabwe dollar lose “...74% of its value within a four-hour period”¹³ against major currencies as a result of these commitments. For Hammar and Brian Raftopoulos, these commitments placed an unsustainable burden on the economy, while giving clear signals as to the regime’s strategic political preferences¹⁴.

Zimbabwe’s “blind move” on war veterans was precipitated with the government’s or rather the president’s unilateral vow to support Laurent Joseph Desire Kabila’s Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) crumbling government. Though the Zimbabwe’s involvement in DRC was seriously protested in parliament by opposition (MDC) speakers on 20 September 2000 on grounds that it was an adventure that resulted in massive loss of lives, had no moral,

financial and even social gains as it created more enemies than friends, “the ruling Zanu (PF) paid a deaf ear to the protest”¹⁵. According to Afro news, Tendai Biti (MDC) who was seconded by Paul Temba Nyathi (MP Gwanda North) argued that:

As long ago as 1996, the Zimbabwean government had been supporting Kabila, even while Mobutu was still in power in then-Zaire. And through a long series of complicated business connections, the Zimbabwean interest in the DRC is financially, not morally or legally, motivated. The way relevant facts have been kept from Zimbabweans is unconscionable. To the extent that those troops are there on taxpayers money, surely the government has an obligation to disclose such information (such as how many soldiers have been killed or captured), particularly since such information does not affect the integrity of the actual military operations on a day to day level. On such important matters as loss of life and prisoners, there is an obligation for them to disclose and disclose fully because we are talking of innocent families... The same obligation applies with regards to the financial costs and financial implications of our adventure in the Congo¹⁶.

As can be noted from Biti and Nyathi’s argument above, Zimbabwe’s involvement in the DRC’s rebel induced war to oust the despotic regime of the then Zaire president, Mobutu Sese Seko meant not only human but also monetary sacrifice for a war that has up to date brought no visible financial gains to Zimbabwe¹⁷. As revealed by Biti, Zimbabwe spent \$6 billion on the DRC:

How do we go to bed with clean conscience when we spend \$6 billion on defence when Mr Stamps' hospitals have no syringes, no aspirins, and yet we spend \$6 billion on the DRC and pretend in this House that we are driven by decency or by patriotic feelings. It is a sin. The DRC is a costly mistake for this country, it is a mistake that should not have been made in the first place, it is a foreign policy blunder, it is a fiscal irresponsibility and we should be able in this House to say so. The level of corruption that is associated with our participation in the DRC, in a country that is already reeling under very heavy corruption is not worth it. Let us pull out of that one area and reduce the level of corruption. There is death in Congo, there is penury that follows that involvement there and all kinds of negative things¹⁸.

This tantamount to meaning that Zimbabwe's involvement in the DRC war had multiple problems associated with it. Among such problems is that it aggravated Zimbabwe's falling economy that had already been crippled by "her failures of the structural adjustment programme by the end of 1990s"¹⁹.

Zimbabwe's Political Affairs and Business Sector Between 2000 and 2008

While the period from 1980 through end of 1999 was marked largely by economic blunders and mismanagement, the period that follows, 2000-2008, had compound problems ranging from economic to political mismanagements. It was a period earmarked by economic mismanagement, the myth of amoral business included, and political instability and violence. The problems associated with political instability

seem to have arisen as a result of the formation of Morgan Tsvangirai's opposition party, Movement for Democratic Party (MDC) in 1999. One may however wonder why there was insurgence of political instability with the formation of MDC when in reality there were already other opposition parties, for instance ZANU NDONGA and ZAPU, in existence.

The reason is simple. The emergence of a labour engineered and dominated political opposition, the MDC provided a formidable challenge to ZANU (PF)'s political party that had remained on power for almost two decades now. ZANU (PF) new for certain that this was not an easy party to sweep out as it was backed by the majority of the civil society groups and the White farmers who were no longer happy with the ruling ZANU (PF) party due its double standards. As such, the emergence of a party like MDC on Zimbabwe's political landscape sent shock waves within the ZANU (PF) party for these two major reasons:

- 1) MDC had a strong White capital support as the Whites were discontented with the ill-conceived land reform programme and,

- 2) MDC had a significant support from the disgruntled labour force, university students and general populace over ZANU (PF)'s poor governance as exemplified by the ill-conceived land reform programme and a slide into lawlessness thereof, and Zimbabwe's military adventures in the economy soaring DRC to support the crumbling government of Laurent Joseph Desire Kabila where the cost benefit analysis showed no positive cost of involvement to the Zimbabwean majority.

More so, during the 1990s, a number of civil society organizations, especially the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade

Unions (ZCTU), where Morgan Tsvangirai was then Secretary-General, emerged as pressure groups to oppose the dominant rule of ZANU (PF), challenging emerging corruption, human rights violations, mismanagement of the national politics and economy as well as poor governance of all other government/state run institutions. This political manoeuvre for civil society groups created conducive environment for the emergence of strong leadership that ultimately led to a powerful alliance of forces that mobilized Zimbabwe's public opinion. By the time the government tabled a draft constitution for a popular referendum in 2000, which, among other things, proposed to strengthen presidential powers and to allow the government to expropriate White commercial farms without compensation, a segment of civil society organizations were successfully mobilized to vote against the constitutional draft. Against the foregoing, the 2000 referendum marked the historical and first political defeat for the ZANU (PF) leadership since independence in 1980. The year 2000 thus became a watershed year in Zimbabwe's political history. It prompted a fierce campaign for the legislative elections in June that year. As ZANU (PF) was fighting for its political life that appeared threatened as exemplified by the 2000 referendum results, the campaign period provided the perfect opportunity for the war veterans who because of the 1997 benefits were all on the side of the ruling party to consolidate their interests in order to augment their political power. It was in this charged political context that land reform became a campaigning tool for economic redistribution and political mobilization. The 'fast-track land reform programme' became an integral part of the campaign process that would guarantee support of ZANU (PF) by the war veterans, the rural folk and all those who were blinded from seeing the reality on the ground.

In order to strike right at the vortex of MDC's financial support, the ZANU (PF) led government decided to sponsor land invasions of mainly White owned farmlands. The 'Fast Track Land Reform Programme' was preceded by land invasions precipitated by frustration over the slow pace of land redistribution, increasing political tensions and worsening poverty. It started with isolated invasions in 1998, particularly in the Svosve and Goromonzi commercial farming areas²⁰. This was followed by the "Fast-track and chaotic agrarian reforms" (Jambanja) that was officially launched by the government in July 2000 with what was allegedly believed to be "the politically motivated and radicalized invasion of productive farms"²¹ and the subsequent disturbance of farming activities and vandalization of expensive and hard to replace farm equipment in the White owned farms. This worsened Zimbabwe's economic turmoil. By 2000 the invasions, primarily by frustrated peasant farmers who had been in poor farmlands since the colonial era, war veterans and unemployed youth, had spread countrywide. It is a well-known fact that Zimbabwe was under direct White colonial rule from 1890 to 1980 when the country attained its political independence following an armed struggle that was mainly occasioned by forced labour and land disposessions by white colonial settlers, widespread dehumanizing tendencies of the colonial settler government towards the indigenous people of Zimbabwe as exemplified by, among others, various punitive taxes and restrictions, and unpopular destocking exercises purportedly executed in the name of controlling rinderpest and sustainable numbers of livestock among the indigenous people of Zimbabwe²². It is also undeniable that this angered the indigenous people and the war veterans because land and livestock were their major sources of wealth and inheritance

from their forefathers. However, even though the exercise of repossessioning land from the White minority appeared noble as it sought to rationalize land resource disequilibria between White settlers and the indigenous people of Zimbabwe, it lacked international support and economic prudence because it destroyed one of the most productive farming sectors in Southern Africa- the once bread basket of the South African region. More so, it was a poorly planned and violent ridden exercise that left not only the White commercial farmers dispossessed of their economic power, but even the black farm workers languishing in abject poverty as they lost jobs and sole source of living. It also resulted in the drastic deterioration in agriculture production at national level. According to the Commercial Farmers' Union (CFU) Report, Zimbabwe's rather chaotic fast-track agrarian land reform resulted in a decline of 70% in value of agriculture production between 2000 and September 2008 when the Government of National Unity was formed:

The total output of the agricultural industry in Zimbabwe in 2000 was 4.3 million tons of agricultural products, worth, at today's prices, some US\$3.347 billion. This output has declined to just over 1.348 million tons of products in 2009, worth some US\$1 billion—a decline of 69 per cent in volume and a decline of 70 per cent in value²³.

Equally affected were the small scale farmers. CATO Institute reports that:

It is not often appreciated that smallholder farmers have been just as badly affected as the large-scale commercial farmers. Their production in 2008 was 73 per cent lower

than their production in 2000. According to the government-appointed Utete Commission, during the first three years of land reform, some 250,000 people and their 1.3 million dependents were forcibly displaced from commercial farms alone²⁴.

From the evidence given by CATO Institute, among other print sources, it is clear that the land reform had been a costly failure to the Zimbabwean economy and business activities in general. A report by CATO Institute confirms that:

In 2008, CFU estimates, over 90 per cent of all production from commercial farms came from the remaining large-scale farmers—the same farmers who are now being targeted. The combined costs of the land reform are staggering— they include US\$2.8 billion in international food aid on an emergency basis, nearly US\$12 billion in lost agricultural production over 10 years, and a potential US\$5 billion in compensation—a total of some US\$20 billion²⁵.

Alongside the fast track and chaotic agrarian reform was the ZANU (PF) government's "...more authoritarian, selective and racialized notions of citizenship and belonging, constituted around the centrality of the land question and the contribution of ZANU (PF) to the liberation struggle"²⁶ and anchored by equally authoritarian pieces of legislation such as the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) [Chapter 11: 17] and Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) [Chapter 10: 27] that was enacted in 2002 to stifle the activities of opposition parties, civic society organizations and the independent local and foreign press operating in the

country²⁷. POSA, for example, allowed the ruling ZANU (PF) government to be in a position that would allow it to have knowledge of all gatherings in any part of the country, especially political ones by opposition parties, before they are held. It therefore acted as a mechanism to control political campaigns by the opposition parties in the country as they would be required by POSA to first notify and have permission granted by the government.

In another move that is allegedly to be politically motivated, in May 2005, the Zimbabwean government committed yet another “blunder” that was not only pernicious to her already staggering economy but to her relationship with humanitarian organizations and the international community in general. This was the launching of a clean-up operation of the Zimbabwean cities known as “Operation Murambatsvina”. The Operation, executed in a militaristic manner, was described as a programme to enforce bylaws to stop all forms of alleged illegal activities in areas such as vending, illegal structures, and illegal cultivation among others in its cities. Concerned by the adverse impact of the “Operation Murambatsvina” on the lives of the urban poor, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr Kofi Annan appointed a Special Envoy on Human Settlements Issues led by Mrs Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka to go to Zimbabwe and assess the situation and present recommendations on how the conditions of those affected may be addressed. The report by the Special Envoy for her mission undertaken between 26 June and 8 July, 2005, in Zimbabwe provides the findings and recommendations of the United Nations (UN). The Special Envoy revealed that:

With little or no warning, the Government of Zimbabwe embarked on an operation purported to “clean-up” its

cities. It was a “crash” operation known as “Operation Murambatsvina,” referred to in this report as *Operation Restore Order*. The first official announcement that a comprehensive “operation” was underway in Zimbabwe, came in a speech by the Chairperson of the Government-appointed Harare Commission, Ms. Sekesai Makwavarara, on 19 May 2005 at the Harare Town House.¹ She characterized it as “a programme to enforce bylaws to stop all forms of illegal activity,” and said it would be enforced “in conjunction with Zimbabwe Republican Police (ZRP).” Five days later, the City of Harare issued a notice, indicating to the people in the Greater Harare area that persons who had erected illegal structures should demolish them by 20 June 2005. There is no evidence that advance notice was given in other cities in Zimbabwe to which the Operation was extended. It started in the Zimbabwe capital, Harare, and rapidly evolved into a nationwide demolition and eviction campaign carried out by the police and the army²⁸.

It is clear from the report that the so-called “Operation Murambatsvina” had perniciously violated the rights of the most ordinary Zimbabweans given that there is no evidence that advance notice was given in other cities in the country. Besides the 2000 farm invasions that grossly violated human rights, Zimbabwe had opened another ‘black page’ in its history of human rights violations. This is because the Operation was viewed as a gruesome and torturous act that physically dehumanized and morally humiliated the Zimbabwean masses; a crime committed under the cloak of restoring order and sanity in the Zimbabwean cities.

What the Zimbabwean government seemed to have not realized is that the demolition of the citizens’ structures in the

name of “Operation Murambatsvina” was symbolic to the history of the country in a way. It symbolized “self-destruction” of her own (the Zimbabwean government) economy and socio-political system. It also meant that the Zimbabwe government’s burden to cater for the poor or needy (affected people) was doubled if not tripled since it is the obligation of any government to protect individual liberty and property right of its people. This is what John Locke meant when categorically argued that the purpose behind the formation of a government is to protect people’s two natural rights, that is, “the right to ownership of private property and the right to liberty”²⁹. For Locke and rightly so, any government has no role to play in people’s lives beyond protection of these natural rights. This makes it clear that the Zimbabwean ‘Operation Murambatsvina’ was a crime against citizens; it was violation of Zimbabweans’ individual rights and right to property as their properties were destroyed by the very government that has the obligation to protect them. No wonder why the UN Special Envoy rightfully challenged and spoke against the Operation. In a report presented to the UN, the Special Envoy thus had this to say of the Zimbabwe government:

Popularly referred to as “Operation Tsunami” because of its speed and ferocity it resulted in the destruction of homes, business premises and vending sites. It is estimated that some 700,000 people in cities across the country have lost either their homes, their source of livelihood or both. Indirectly, a further 2.4 million people have been affected in varying degrees. Hundreds of thousands of women, men and children were made homeless, without access to food, water and sanitation, or health care. Education for thousands of school age

children has been disrupted. Many of the sick, including those with HIV and AIDS, no longer have access to care. Immediate measures need to be taken to bring those responsible to account, and for reparations to be made to those who have lost property and livelihoods. In parallel, other confidence-building measures need to be taken to restore dialogue between the Government of Zimbabwe and civil society³⁰.

Because of the Operation's devastating effects, the UN Special Envoy even described the "Operation Murambatsvina" as chaotic, unjust, unlawful and illegitimate:

Even if motivated by a desire to ensure a semblance of order in the chaotic manifestations of rapid urbanization and rising poverty characteristic of African cities, none the less Operation Restore Order turned out to be a disastrous venture based on a set of colonial era laws and policies that were used as a tool of segregation and social exclusion. There is an urgent need to suspend these outdated laws and to review them within the briefest time possible to ensure the sustainability of humanitarian response and to set the stage for meaningful physical reconstruction and the restoration of livelihoods...Operation Restore Order breached both national and international human rights law provisions guiding evictions, thereby precipitating a humanitarian crisis. The government of Zimbabwe should pay compensation where it is due for those whose property was unlawfully destroyed³¹.

It is further noted in the report that the Operation created or rather worsened the people's socio-economic

situation, a “wound” blindly initiated by the Zimbabwean government against its own people in the name of restoring order unaware that it would cost the country years to heal it. In other words, the Operation was a serious drawback to the drowning Zimbabwean economy given that the informal trade sector was booted out of business only to be left with neither formal nor informal employment. This means life of those Zimbabweans in the informal sector was inhumanly reduced to destitution by this government’s decision. The UN Special Envoy was correct therefore in its assessment when it noted that:

The humanitarian consequences of Operation Restore Order are enormous. It will take several years before the people and society as a whole can recover. There is an immediate need for the Government of Zimbabwe to recognize the virtual state of emergency that has resulted, and to allow unhindered access by the international and humanitarian community to assist those that have been affected. Priority needs include shelter and non-food items, food and health support services...The wrecking of the informal sector by Operation Restore Order will have detrimental effects at a time that the economy remains in serious difficulties. Apart from drastically increasing unemployment, the Operation will have a knock-on effect on the formal economy including agriculture³².

It is in the light of this humanitarian crisis created by the Zimbabwean government that the UN Special Convoy recommended in her report that all who orchestrated the Operation were supposed to be brought to book and face the wrath of the law given the gravity of the crime they had

committed against innocent Zimbabweans. The Special Convey thus had this to say:

Although a case for crime against humanity under Article 7 of the Rome Statute might be difficult to sustain, the Government of Zimbabwe clearly caused large sections of its population serious suffering that must now be redressed with the assistance of the United Nations and the broader international community. The international community should encourage the Government to prosecute all those who orchestrated this catastrophe and those who may have caused criminal negligence leading to alleged deaths, if so confirmed by an independent internal inquiry/inquest. The international community should then continue to be engaged with human rights concerns in Zimbabwe in consensus building political forums such as the UN Commission on Human Rights, or its successor, the African Union Peer Review Mechanism, and in the Southern African Development Community³³.

In short, the “Operation Murambatsvina” had both short and long term socio-economic, political and institutional impact on the Zimbabwean government and society in general. This is rightly captured in the UN Special Convey Report which noted:

The effects will be felt for many years to come, across all four dimensions. In social terms, the Operation has rendered people homeless and destitute, and created humanitarian and developmental needs that will require significant investment and assistance over several years. Economically, substantial housing stock has been destroyed, and the informal sector has virtually been

wiped out, rendering individuals and households destitute. Local municipalities that used to collect taxes from informal traders have now lost this source of income. In political terms, the Operation has exacerbated an already tense and polarized climate characterized by mistrust and fear. It has resulted in a virtual breakdown in dialogue between Government and civil society. Institutionally, the Operation was conducted by central Government authorities, including the military, in an area that legally falls under the purview of local government³⁴.

By the end of 2005, the problems initiated by the Zimbabwean government since its independence in 1980 had left the country with no “real” economic solutions in sight despite the Governor of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, Gideon Gono, declaring an imminent turn-around of the economy. The recent International Monetary Fund (IMF) Mission, under Article IV of the consultation framework, indicated that the economy is likely to decline by a further 7% and that by end of year the inflation that was currently running at about 140%, would not be arrested to any significant levels, and that foreign currency reserves were down to three days³⁵. Further, foreign exchange shortages were reported to have restricted essential imports needed for industrial and agricultural production, fuel, energy and basic commodities, thereby exacerbating the decline of the formal economy and the government’s revenue base. Besides, it was reported that:

The budget deficit was also estimated to exceed 14% of GDP and domestic debt estimated at USD 1 billion. Unemployment currently stands at 75% with over 70 % of the population living under the poverty line.

Zimbabwe also has one of the highest divides in Africa both in terms of access to resources and in consumption with about 80% of the population sharing less than 20% of national wealth. Food shortage exacerbated by drought affecting the entire sub-region has been an additional challenge faced by the country since 2001-2002, particularly in the rural areas, leading to a humanitarian crisis. The food deficit is estimated at 1.2 MT of maize for the 2005-6 season³⁶.

This report makes it clear that by 2005 the socio-economic and political crippling challenges in Zimbabwe had now gathered momentum than ever before. The previous blunders by the government thus were not only a lesson but a home work to seriously think about. In an attempt to arrest the situation was aggravated by the devastating “Operation Murambatsvina” the Zimbabwean government committed yet another economically obliterating “blunder”. This was the 2007 “Operation Dzikisai Mitengo”. The infamous “Operation Dzikisai Mitengo” (Operation Reduce Prices) was officially launched in June 2007. This Operation was meant to deal with problem of price hikes that had badly affected the Zimbabwean business sector. As such, price control was a move targeted to caution the public’s standard of living as prices of goods were now soaring not only to the languishing unemployed population but even to the formally employed. Besides, the Operation Reduce Prices was a move to do away with informal trading and to garnish and arrest inflation that was triggered up thereof by informal trading across the country. In light of this, the Operation was launched on the government’s understanding that the tragedy of an economy that is dominated by the informal sector is that its revenue base contract because most informal traders evade paying

taxes to government. Put it differently, the informal trading of, among other commodities, mineral resources and basic human needs and wants meant that the national fiscus was deprived of the revenue that it so needed in order to deliver key services to the population such as sufficient electricity and health services. As a matter of consequence, the central government's revenue base shrinks at the expense of informal traders who may get richer and richer while the government gets poorer and poorer such that its ability to meet vital national obligations such as importation of fuel, electricity and food is severely compromised.

However, little was it known by the government that Operation Reduce Prices was economically devastating to the country in that it incapacitated producers, wholesalers and retailers to continue operating, thereby ushering in a pariah status to the economy of Zimbabwe. On the other hand, the investor confidence tumbled and Zimbabwe's creditworthiness was compromised leading to the deepening of the country's economy-a further economic fall and chaos. This led many scholars to criticize the Operation. Criticizing the Operation, Maanda and Tsunga argue that:

The order by the government for business to reduce prices and sell their commodities at prices that prevailed before June 18, 2007 was ill conceived and was executed without regard to the consequences that have since proved to be dire for the economy³⁷.

As such, the consequences of the government's action on price control did not take long to surface as the operation faced significant resistance from the business people. As a counter to resistance by the business people, a significant number of business owners and executives were nabbed for

allegedly selling their commodities at prices that were higher than those that prevailed before 18 June 2007 well before the law that was used to convict them was promulgated. This way of doing by the Zimbabwean government, as with many other African countries, is what Ayittey defines as statism³⁸. He defines statism as:

State hegemony in the economy and the direction of economic activity or development by the state through such devices as price control, legislative acts, regulations, state ownership of means of production, and operation of state enterprises³⁹.

From a democratic perspective, statism is a condemnable act and a clear manifestation of a command economy whereby the state hegemony and dictatorial tendencies on the national economy are well pronounced. This type of an economy has a tendency of scaring away foreign investors.

Having foreseen self-triggered doom on Zimbabwe's economy through the economically suicidal and violent land reform, fiscal indiscipline and alleged violation of human and property rights and later its price controls of basic commodities to curb inflation, Bloch warned the Zimbabwean government that:

Recurrent political interventions are contrary to sound business decision-making and constructive operational procedures.... Zimbabwe thus had to disinvest from its enterprises that market forces govern the future operations of those enterprises in a competitive environment, and that the disinvestment is pursued in a transparent constructive manner⁴⁰.

Price controls which are “the fixing of prices in order to prevent price inflation and to cushion the generality of consumers”⁴¹ and are one such interventions and a major characteristic of a command economy, that is, a national economy largely regulated by the government.

However, docketed history has shown price controls to be an unwise economic policy not only from a democratic perspective as explained above. It has tragic consequences to the growth of national economies. Wherever they have been implemented whether selectively or holistically since Ancient Rome, price controls have always had disastrous results such as the emergence of black market. Thus, it is of no use to fix prices because doing so has attendant known disastrous consequences such as the emergence of a vibrant black market, reduction in the quality of products produced and sold as well as loss of time by consumers who have to queue for relatively long hours in order to access certain commodities. It is in view of this understanding that political and economic commentators like David Coltart had this to say:

Though at the root of Zimbabwe’s problems is a corrupt political elite that has, with considerable international support, behaved with utter impunity for some two decades the final blow to the manufacturing sector...[came] from the government’s price control policy announced at the end of June 2007. In an effort to stem runaway inflation, the government announced halving all prices. In the six months that followed, manufacturing output fell by more than 50 per cent and, unless they could export their goods, many manufacturing firms had to shut down⁴².

As can be seen from Coltart's comments, Zimbabwe's decision to embark in an Operation Reduce Price was a misfire by the government that had the potential to yield unimagined consequences. It was also a misread of the world's economic history as such efforts had been done in some countries before but with no success.

With such economic problems, it seems the only way for Zimbabwe to get out of the "mess" was revise its national politics and economic policies; to move away from a command economic system to a free market system which is more liberal and democratic. A free market system would lead to production levels that are commensurate with people's needs and wants thereby promoting not only economic growth but also public interest compared to the command economy. This kind of thinking was nurtured and supported by some government officials like Herbert Murerwa. In his presentation of the 2003 National Budget, the then Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Herbert Murerwa noted the lack of utility of price controls to consumers and the productive sector of the economy when he argued, contrary to the common notion that price are beneficial to the generality of consumers, that:

Efforts to protect the consumer from spiralling prices are being undermined by price controls that focus mostly on the final product, ignoring developments affecting inputs into the production process. This has affected production viability and sustainability of the controlled price levels⁴³.

In the light of the negative impacts that the government's efforts to control prices of basic commodities and reduce inflation obtained, it was naturally confirmed that free market system, if properly administered is better than a command

economy or 'statist economy'. This is because in most economies where price controls have been implemented, the prices of the controlled commodities are fixed below market value. As a result, producers, manufacturers and downstream sellers, respectively, are discouraged from producing and selling consumer goods because it does not make economic profit to manufacture or sell commodities whose selling price is decreed below its market worth. It is therefore undisputable that selling the commodity at below market value is economically illogical and therefore producers either stop producing or downsize production levels thereby causing shortages in the market thereby giving rise to uncouth ethical practices such as black market trading. For Murerwa price controls give rise to:

Shortages of critical basic commodities on the formal market. Where these are available, they are not easily accessible to the majority of the poor since they are not traded openly. A thriving parallel market for basic commodities, where the price is much higher than the controlled price. This is the market where a significant part of our population is sourcing basic commodities. The beneficiaries of the price controls are, therefore, the speculators and dealers and not the targeted vulnerable groups⁴⁴.

Though price controls may succeed in suppressing the hyperinflationary surge for some time, their stoppage would herald a spiral rise in inflation and a steep rise in prices of commodities as witnessed in Zimbabwe after the marginal relaxation of price controls following its controversial intensification in mid-June 2007. In view of this, Rockoff rightly notes that "price controls only postpone the day of

reckoning, converting what would have been a steady inflation into a period of slow inflation followed by more rapid inflation”⁴⁵.

In a Country report (Zimbabwe) by the International Monetary Fund, it was confirmed that “...the tightening of price controls and exchange restrictions exacerbated the deterioration in business climate...thereby worsening Zimbabwe’s economic freefall”⁴⁶.

This report together with the aftermath of Zimbabwe’s June 2007 price control are clear testimonies to the truism that the command and control approach to national economy, though it coercively manages to suppress inflation to respectable levels at least when the controls are still in force, have consequences that are dire to the whole economy in the long run that include a steep rise in inflation once the controls are lifted, shortages of commodities, expansion of informal trade and a shrinkage of the national economy. The aftermaths of the 2007 price controls also revealed the economic fact that was only known in theory by most Zimbabweans that in a hyperinflationary environment, the few moneyed, well connected the ruling elite are enriched while subjecting the masses to abject poverty. With regard to this fact, Robinson is quoted by Raftopoulos as arguing that:

Hyperinflation is... notorious for concentrating incomes in the hands of the rich while impoverishing the poor, often making already highly unequal societies even more divided. In Zimbabwe’s case, this undesirable process has been magnified through being accompanied by high levels of patronage⁴⁷.

Given that in such a situation, the key resources are only shared among the select few the national economy becomes

even more informalized leading to the emergence of a number of morally scandalous business practices and social inequalities-the increase of the social gap between the poor and the rich.

The rewards for long-term investment in production were miniscule compared to the rapid profits of buying cheap and selling dear. Additionally, the informalization of production structures that intensified in this period also provided new opportunities for entrepreneurs with links to the party [ZANU (PF)] and the state to accumulate wealth in the gold-and diamond-mining sectors⁴⁸.

The year 2008 was not only characterized by corruption, hyperinflation and goods scarcity, but political instability and violence. The way the people of Zimbabwe voted in the watershed and historic harmonized elections on the 29th of March 2008 was largely influenced by “the declining national economy, a collapse of the democratic process in the country, general failure of the rule of law, land seizures [that brought untold hunger in the country] and the way inflation was manipulated to make the very rich even richer”⁴⁹. Politically speaking, it was more of a vote of no confidence in the ruling ZANU (PF) party’s as result of its failure to deal with a plethora of Zimbabwe’s endemic problems ranging from economic to socio-political crises. These problems compounded with the crippling world recession led to a ceremonial and near total defeat of the then ZANU (PF) led government on the 29th of March 2008 harmonized elections. For scholars like Tarisayi:

The declining economy, a collapse of the democratic process, failure of the rule of law, land seizures and the

way inflation was manipulated to make the very rich even richer shaped the manner in which the people of Zimbabwe voted, particularly in the March polls, which were effectively a 'vote of no confidence' in the ruling party⁵⁰.

This is tantamount to saying that the ZANU (PF)'s 2008 harmonized elections defeat at the hands of the two formations of the MDC (MDC-M and MDC-T) was a direct response of the Zimbabwean people to the socio-economic and political crises that the generality of the electorate believed were directly initiated and extended by the ZANU (PF) government. However, this was interpreted differently by the ruling party, ZANU (PF) as it believed the masses had been bewitched by the opposition MDC and therefore was immediate need to remind them of what they fought for during the liberation struggle; to take them back to their histories. On the other hand, the MDC party saw itself as the only party that had been sent to set free the people of Zimbabwe from the autocratic rule of the ZANU (PF) government as it also continued echoing its sentiments that it was prepared to free Zimbabwe from the bondage of dictatorship. In the issue of the *Gazette* "Tsvhu Kuivhu," MDC proclaimed:

Let us all go and free Zimbabwe! The MDC would win 'a victory of the future'. But it would also restore the past: We will fight tooth and nail to recover the bright colours of Zimbabwe ... We are all descendants of great kings and queens and need to be treated like royalty ... Through the perpetuation of ignorance among the people by rehashing the past Mugabe is trying to ensure a power strangle-hold [but] the people will catch him naked on

March 9 and 10 ... History has its appointed time for every living soul and people. For Dzimbahwe the time is nigh. This country will never be a colony of dictators again⁵¹.

As such, it saw itself as a party fully prepared to restore the incumbent government's legacy of misrule and usher in a new era that can be equated to the Biblical Israelites' Canaan-the country flowing with milk and honey. This belief was not only kept in the MDC's mind alone but was preached to the international community which immediately intervened in varying ways and degrees. The belief, for instance, occasioned European and United States of America crafting sanctions against the country and ZANU (PF) prominent figures thereby adding paraffin to the already burning fire- the existing socio-economic and political problems.

From these realities, the presidential contestants especially Morgan Tsvangirai and Simba Makoni who had left ZANU (PF) at the hour of greatest need, were therefore, disparagingly labelled the "stooges of the West"⁵² by Mugabe and his ZANU (PF) not only for dining at the same table with the Whites but for daring to challenge his position as head of state. The two formations of the MDC put together defeated ZANU (PF) in council and parliamentary elections and the MDC-T presidential candidate, Morgan Tsvangirai, fell short of the legally mandatory 50 plus percentage votes to defeat the long time and veteran Zimbabwean leader, Robert Mugabe in a tight but controversial electoral circumstances. For reasons not well explained, the presidential election results were announced five weeks after the voting day. Robert Mugabe (ZANU PF), Morgan Tsvangirai (MDC-T), Simba Makoni (Mavambo Project) and the little known independent candidate, Langton Towungana were on paper

as the presidential candidates, "...but in fact it was a triangular fight between Robert Mugabe of ZANU (PF), Morgan Tsvangirai of the MDC-T and Mugabe's former Finance Minister and fellow Politburo member, Simba Makoni, who stood as an independent candidate"⁵³.

Presidential elections were held and Morgan Tsvangirai (MDC) garnered 47.9 % of the total presidential vote, Robert Mugabe (ZANU (PF) garnered 43.2%, Simba Makoni had 8.3% of the vote with 207,470 votes cast for him and Langton Towungana had 0.6% of the vote with 14, 503 votes cast for him. As such, none of the four candidates was announced to have won the victory. This was because in so far as Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) is concerned; none of the four presidential candidates had received an outright majority required by the Electoral Act to claim victory. A run-off election was therefore imminent between the top two candidates: namely Morgan Tsvangirai (MDC) and Robert Mugabe (ZANU (PF). A presidential runoff election was set for the 27th of June 2008 pitting ZANU (PF)'s Robert Mugabe and MDC-T's Morgan Tsvangirai in order to decide the ultimate winner to lead Zimbabwe for the next six years. However, unprecedented levels of violence mainly directed at opposition supporters through hate language, death threats and a largely manipulated electoral playing field saw MDC-T led Morgan Tsvangirai to pull out of this sham of an election a week before its prescribed date. This was a sad confirmation of Zimbabwe's "...a chequered electoral history"⁵⁴ whereby elections are manipulated to the advantage of the incumbent and therefore, by and large, seemingly predetermined.

ZANU (PF) was deeply angered and disturbed by Tsvangirai's decision to pull out from the 27 June 2008 runoff election because it knew that a one man race would

not give birth to an expected legitimate result and leader of Zimbabwe thereof. Electoral legitimacy can only genuinely be conferred via an unfettered expression of freedom through a credible electoral process. The MDC-T, through its decision to pull out of the controversial runoff election, seems to have refused to be used as means of legitimating a political process that was openly a negation of a democratic process of electing governments into power. Given that ZANU (PF) has been blamed for bringing down a once promising Southern African economic giant to its knees thorough its poor economic and political policies and uncalculated decisions, majority of the Zimbabweans especially those with analytic capabilities saw better life and eminent hope in the opposition MDC-T to rescue Zimbabwe from its economic and political squalors. Nevertheless, a controversial presidential runoff election shuttered their hopes as the ZANU (PF) candidate had high hopes for a victory in a one man election race.

Yet with ZANU (PF) winning a one man election race, a crisis of legitimacy engulfed the newly elected Zimbabwean head of state that had to contend with a parliament dominated by the opposition and the trademark quite diplomacy and overt silence of the international community and fellow African governments when a fellow African government openly errs. This automatically meant that outside the African frontiers, and for the MDC-T, the legitimacy of Robert Mugabe as the new head of state of Zimbabwe was openly disputable because he had won an election that he had contested alone following a violent ridden pre-election period that humbled the MDC-T candidate into pulling out. While the 29 March 2008 harmonized elections had an element of indetermination, that is, political parties were allowed to campaign with relative

freedom thereby enhancing the chances of any of these parties to win the election, the 27 June 2008 presidential run-off election was heavily predetermined through a militarized massive voter intimidation and intensive ‘coaching’ at rallies. For the World Report 2009:

Even though the build up to the March [2008] elections was generally peaceful, despite some flaws in the electoral process...the months afterwards were marked by a well-planned and systematic campaign of violence by ZANU-PF and its allies. In an attempt to overturn the vote in the presidential run-off, government-backed militia and war veterans, ZANU-PF officials and supporters, and senior military officers waged a vicious campaign of intimidation against MDC activists and suspected supporters'-a ploy which seemed to have worked but lacked credibility and wider acceptance at national and international levels⁵⁵.

As can be seen from the World Report 2009 above, ZANU (PF) totally obliterated “free expression of the people’s choice”⁵⁶ that ought to be the hallmark of a democratic society. There was therefore an outcry from both the fellow Zimbabweans, especially the MDC supporters and the international community against ZANU (PF)’s violence, intimidation and the whole lot political gimmicks.

However, ZANU (PF) countered claims that it was perpetrating violence and intimidation against MDC supporters and its leadership as just but a ploy by the opposition to pull out of the runoff election because their candidate was facing real defeat from ZANU (PF)’s candidate. For ZANU (PF), the electorate had realized that it had “erred” in attempting to vote Tsvangirai into power, who, for ZANU (PF), represented the interests of imperialists

and White supremacist ideals. Therefore, for them, Tsvangirai was a puppet of the West who, through his MDC-T party wanted to reverse the gains of independence and literally the tide of history that saw patriotic sons and daughters of Zimbabwe fighting a protracted struggle to dethrone the White settler government in Zimbabwe that brought the much sought after political independence in 1980. This political propaganda together with Mugabe's usual slogan that "Zimbabwe will never be a colony again"⁵⁷ were the only ways for ZANU (PF) to win back the people's support.

In what appeared to be a ridiculous report, the opposition, MDC was accused of intimidation and violence against ZANU (PF) supporters and members⁵⁸ even though the discernment of the so-called international community openly dismissed these ZANU (PF) claims and the tag of victims that they unashamedly assumed as lies. The seemingly visible show of sympathy and support to the MDC caused by mostly Western governments prior to and after the disputed 2008 elections strengthened the ZANU (PF) claim that the MDC was a front for the colonial interests in Zimbabwe especially their kith and kin who had "their" treasured land resource taken away from them in very controversial circumstances of the so-called farm invasions since the year 2000. In this regard, Badza notes that:

Domestic and foreign supporters and sympathizers for ZANU (PF) government are influenced by this perception. They regard Mugabe as a true African hero, fighting an African cause, and regard Tsvangirai as a puppet of the West. To them, the Zimbabwe crisis is part of a grand imperialist conspiracy to forcibly reform or, if it fails, dislodge, all African "revolutionary" liberation

movements, leaders and rulers, with Zimbabwe just being the pilot project⁵⁹.

Thus, since the formation of the opposition, MDC, the ZANU (PF) party has always seen the opposition as nothing other than a creation of Western governments to effect regime change in Zimbabwe or rather to bring back the colonial rule on the scene. In this view, MDC was labelled an enemy to all African revolutionary parties and the cause and irreversibility of national independence in Zimbabwe.

The economic and political crises that heightened after the 2008 June run offs worried and at this time fully attracted the attention of the international community, particularly the United Nations (UN) and Southern African Development Community (SADC). There was violence all over the country, hunger, poverty, hyperinflation, scarcity of basic commodities, high levels of corruption, and virtually no business for people of Zimbabwe. Things were just more than bad. The international community and SADC had to intervene in order to avoid further suffering of the masses and a possibility of a “civil war” in a country whose ground appeared to have been well prepared for a battle. The international community tasked SADC to immediately deal with the Zimbabwean problem. The then South African President Thabo Mbeki, was appointed by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to act as mediator between ZANU-PF and the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) to resolve the political crisis that had paralyzed the economy and all government systems. Mbeki arrived in Zimbabwe on 18 June 2008 and held meetings with both parties⁶⁰, that is, with ZANU (PF) and the opposition MDC. The meeting resolved that since neither MDC nor ZANU (PF) had received an outright majority

required by the Electoral Act to claim victory and that conditions to ensure a free and fair elections were still far from reach, the two parties can only form a coalition government to take over while they are preparing ground for a free and fair election. The Government of National Unity (GNU), that is, Zimbabwe's coalition government was formed on the 13th of February in 2009, following the inaugurations of Morgan Tsvangirai as Prime Minister and Thokozani Khupe and Arthur Mutambara as Deputy Prime Ministers. The ZANU (PF)'s Robert Mugabe was appointed the President of the state. For the country's economic and political good, following the deal's signing, all agreements within the GNU were to be fully implemented before the election of a new democratic government in Zimbabwe is held.

Zimbabwe's Business and Political Situation after the Government of National Unity (GNU) in February 2009

The heightened economic and political crises that characterized Zimbabwe as she was moving closer to the historic harmonized elections of March 29th 2008 were perceived differently at home (in Zimbabwe) and by the international community. On one hand, the crises in the country led to the unimagined suffering and deaths among the innocent Zimbabweans. Yet, on another hand, it was historic as it marked the birth of the new era especially with the formation of the GNU thereafter.

In the light of the latter view, a number of positive changes were brought forth politically and economically with the birth of the GNU in Zimbabwe. To start with, the economically turbulent environment with its morally scandalous business malpractices and economic policies that

existed prior to the formation of the GNU was revised for the first time in Zimbabwe's history since her national independence in 1980. The business malpractices that rocked the Zimbabwean business prior to the formation of the GNU were allegedly initiated and extended by the then ruling party, ZANU (PF). As Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition noted:

It is clear that in Zimbabwe the fight is not for the people, but for the protection and retention of ill-gotten wealth. This may very well be clear evidence of the existence of a 'rentier' class in Zimbabwe that is focused on primitive accumulation of wealth without contributing anything to the economy. This parasitic class is sucking Zimbabwe dry while purporting to be custodians of a national revolution for the emancipation of the black majority. This is just the tip of an iceberg⁶¹.

The same report gave an example of senior ZANU-PF official and government minister for local government, Ignatius Chombo's catalogue of assets that is "scandalous and outrageous," especially given that the majority of Zimbabweans are living in abject poverty. This is evidence that the political ills and business malpractices in Zimbabwe especially prior to the formation of the GNU had a direct link to government's poorly structured and implemented politico-economic policies. And for the Zimbabwean majority and the external world, particularly the Western world, such shaky political and economic standing was a clear manifestation of poor governance of the national economy.

More so, the Zimbabwean political and economic crisis was allegedly caused by the government's misconception and poor implementation of the principles of democracy which

the country purported to be following since the time it part ways with the socialist type of government.

From its Greek etymology, democracy so to speak comes from the Greek compound word *democratia* [*demos*=people; *cratos*=rule] meaning, “rule by the people”. Understood this way, democracy seems simple and easy to understand though the truth is the concept has been notoriously understood and poorly applied by some national governments throughout the world as we shall see shortly. In his Gettysburg address, Abraham Lincoln defined democracy as simply a government of the people, by the people and for the people. Today the world-over, democracy is almost universally recommended to cascade everywhere in contemporary social, political and economic contracts among others because of the understanding that it is a good form of governance; a form of government that is just and fair for all citizens-the rulers and the ruled. As Owaseyi observes that:

It is evident that the most popular form of government today in the world is democracy, judging by its wide acceptance and pretensions to it by those who in reality are disinclined to its tenets. The reason for this lies in the fact that being democratic today now signifies being good and admissible into the committee of nations as opposed to the isolation meted out to regimes considered to be despotic⁶².

However, in ancient Greek states like Athens, democracy was a practice through which only male citizens (excluding women, children, slaves and foreigners) could meet, discuss and deliberate on matters affecting humanity. Conceived from its roots-Athens-where it was pinned down and was first applied as a form of government democracy seems a

very complex term to philosophically unpack. It means different things to different people especially with the contemporary question of human rights where all people (men, women, children, slaves and foreigners, etc.) are considered equal before the law. For this reason, it is one word that over time and history has been contested and changed meaning more than once and in more than one direction. Hence, there is need to understand it clearly.

It is from this realization that scholars like McGowan, arguing in view of Zimbabwe's crisis, remarks: "If democracy is not properly defined people would live in an inextricable confusion of ideas, much to the advantage of demagogues and despots"⁶³. Indeed Zimbabwe's misconception of democracy had resulted in confusion that characterized the frosty relationship between Western governments and the then Zimbabwean government where the Western countries argued that the pre-GNU government was an outright political dictatorship that has an infamous history of economic and political mismanagement; that it was an undemocratic government-a government which did not cherish the freedom or liberty of its citizens. The GNU had to correct the pre-GNU misconception of democracy and put the country in the right track. Partially, this is being achieved as some critical sectors of social life, like the economy, has been, though not fully, liberalized. As a result, there has been significant growth of the national economy. Thus with the democratization of the economy, it has been proven beyond doubt that economic democracy as political democracy in a country cherishing a free market driven economy as opposed to a command economy has positive advantages. An economy that cherishes a free market system is therefore favourable than that which cherishes command economy.

With the GNU in Zimbabwe, free market system has managed to arrest inflation to low levels, stabilize prices of basic commodities, generally reduce incidences of unethical business practices and cushion the life of the ordinary citizens.

Politically speaking, though the pre-GNU government has always denied charges that it was undemocratic and in turn has blamed Western governments and the USA for being highly undemocratic and cruel in their contribution to the political and economic crises in the country, with the formation of GNU in February 2009, the journey towards true democracy had started. Though undemocratic and oppressive laws like AIPA and POSA are still in the books of law, and a lot more still needs to be done to attain total press freedom, freedom of expression (true democracy), the decision by the GNU to revise the Zimbabwean constitution which has numerous repressive and oppressive laws is a “good” road map towards true democracy. If the constitution and the long cultivated culture of political and business immorality like corruption are carefully drafted and dealt with respectively, Zimbabwe is likely to get back on track and once again become a promising economic giant of the Southern African region. This is because political stability or rather democratic laws and low levels of corruption in a country are likely to lure foreign investment, investor confidence and external donations. Once this starts happening, there will be cash inflows and normal trade with the international business arena which encourage national economic growth thereof. Thus, if fully implemented, the GNU in Zimbabwe will continue yielding positive results, economically and politically as well as socially.

Four Lessons that Zimbabwe Can Learn from its Own Political and Economic Meltdown

It is undisputable that for the past decade or so, Zimbabwe is one African country that has lived a historically “unhappy life”. Its experiences have surpassed those that are lived by countries declared to be in a state of war. This has been so because no sphere of life for the Zimbabweans was left unaffected, from politics to economic, religious to faith based, and from individual to group.

These experiences, though nasty and horrible, will not remain a lesson to the international community alone to avoid at all costs, but for Zimbabwe herself to learn from her own past experiences and avoid the famous dictum that “history repeats itself”. It is therefore high time that Zimbabwe should wake up from its “slumber”; to accept truth, change and implement positive policies that harbour no wishes to turn back the clock of development, whether socio-economic or political, to the past.

Business-wise, what Zimbabwe can learn from her past sad and sorry experiences is the fact that economic democratization or what is widely referred to as free market system as with political democracy reduces the impact and growth of black market trading and other such immoral business practices by business people. It is out of this realization that one can argue that a command market is always an ill performing economy that breeds a plethora of corporate misdeeds such as the emergence of a vibrant black market that threatens to choke the formal market to the dustbin of oblivion. This reasoning is valid. In the case of pre-GNU Zimbabwe, it was premised on the understanding that since black market traders do their business clandestinely and outside the parameters of the laws governing operations

of business enterprises, it proved very difficult for the government to get the much needed tax revenue from the multitude of black marketers who had transformed themselves into a major economic class on Zimbabwe's economic arena. As such, black market trading causes unrest to both consumers who suffer from exorbitant prices (in the black market) and the economy in the long run because of, among others, its prohibitive and morally scandalous pricing, and failure to pay taxes to the government. Economic developments following the formation of the GNU in 2009 are therefore a living testimony that a return to the fundamentals of a free market system could raise Zimbabwe from its decades' long economic free-fall.

Second, the Zimbabwean government can learn that undemocratic politics and practices that overlap economic activities do more harm than good to the national economy. Put differently, political despotism would almost always negatively affect national economy in so far as it extends its dictatorial tendencies to the running of the economy in the form of, among other things, controlling price of basic commodities and dictating those managing the national economy on what to do. On the contrary, a political democracy almost always is quite comfortable with a free market system where individuals and organizations freely trade their wares with buyers to the extent that foreign investor and investor confidence build up. It is in this light that there should be a clear cut difference between business and politics as these are two different domains, though at times should interact, but only for the good of each other. The misconception and failure by the Zimbabwean government to draw the clear cut between politics and business, especially in last decade or so, has therefore jeopardized the Zimbabwean economy. As a matter of

consequence, investor confidence, foreign investors and donor funders especially from the Western bloc have dwindled only to pick with the formation of the unity government in 2009. It is out of this realization that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Country Report of 2009 announced that:

A raft of positive changes in the management of Zimbabwe's economy has breathed life into the economy and given some confidence to otherwise highly sceptical investors in the ability of the transitional arrangement to stop and reverse a decade long economic meltdown that was largely caused by flawed economic and political decisions by the government that was then in power. It is against...[this] background of the economic and humanitarian crisis, the new administration has rapidly taken several macroeconomic and supply-side policy actions in the fiscal, monetary, financial, and structural areas aimed at maintaining low inflation, halting and reversing the economic decline, and improving social conditions⁶⁴.

In Zimbabwe, economic developments following the formation of the GNU in 2009 when politics' influence on economic activities were more minimal than ever since national independence in 1980, have significantly helped substantiating the thesis that national politics and economics should be given two different playing grounds if the latter is to grow positively.

Third, Zimbabwe should learn that good relations with the international community are not only important for political peace but for economic growth of the country. This has been clear since the year 2000 when the international

community started to question Zimbabwe's government's democratic credentials and economic policies. As a result, the relationship between Zimbabwe and the Western community was severely strained. The strained relationship between Zimbabwe and the West has been interpreted differently by Zimbabweans in different political parties in the country. While MDC has openly preached a gospel of unity and good relations with the international community in order to resuscitate the country's economy and political image, ZANU (PF) supporters, have come to think that anyone who is White, a friend of the West or who support any Western ideology is an enemy of the government and in particular ZANU (PF) and all African parties that liberated Africa from the colonial rule. Whatever the argument might be, it is undisputable that in the past decade or so, Zimbabwe's poor relations with the international community, particularly the Western bloc has aggravated the country's socio-political and economic situation. The consequences of these strained relations have been numerous ranging, among others, from sanctions on the country and the top ZANU (PF) party officials, closure of some Western business companies in the country, the dwindling of cash inflows into the country and withdrawal of donor funders. This is to say that relations between the European Union (EU) and Zimbabwe have been sour over the past decade with President Robert Mugabe accusing the bloc of agitating for regime change through the imposition of sanctions and backing the main MDC party led by Morgan Tsvangirai. The look of things after the formation of the GNU has clearly shown that once the country fully normalize its relations and engagements with the international community the socio-political and economic life significantly improve. This is because though the Global Political Agreement (GPA) between the three parties in the GNU

namely ZANU (PF), MDC-T and MDC M, has not been fully implemented, there has been significant support in terms of donor funds from the West after the formation of the GNU. More so, the Western community has pledged to assist Zimbabwe in kind or cash once all the parties in the GNU fully implement the GPA of February 2009. In fact, since the formation of the unity government, Zimbabwe and the EU have opened re-engagement talks. The Zimbabwe Independent editor, Constantine Chimanikire, in October 2010 spoke to the newly appointed EU head of delegation to Zimbabwe, Ambassador Aldo Dell’Ariccia, in the capital, Harare on the issue of sanctions and GPA, among others. In Chimanikire’s interview with the EU ambassador, the latter revealed that:

First of all, they are not sanctions but restrictive measures. The measures have been in force since 2002 and were a result of certain circumstances. They are reviewed every year to assess how the situation has evolved. The last review was February 2010. The measures were imposed on people who violated human rights and during the last review some people and companies were removed from the list. These restrictive measures are not a stumbling block to the economic development of Zimbabwe. These are targeted sanctions, targeted on certain individuals and certain companies and not the population of Zimbabwe⁶⁵.

In the same interview, the EU ambassador revealed that:

Even though there is no direct support to the government, our cooperation goes into the strategic development of the country and it goes largely beyond

strictly humanitarian aid. Just yesterday, the EU announced a 13, 8 million euros envelope to go into the sugar industry. It is very important because beneficiaries of this project are smallholders. The money is for boosting production in the sugar sector. Trade between Zimbabwe and the EU has been increasing steadily. I am pleased to say the EU has been the second most important trading partner of Zimbabwe after South Africa⁶⁶.

Fourth, it should be a big lesson to Zimbabwe that ethics is not only a necessary cushion but an indispensable element that should be seriously considered in all human affairs, be it business, governance, politics or any form of game within the country's boundaries. Where ethics is denied access and place, for example, in fundamental government decisions, life becomes extremely difficult for both the government and the citizens. In chapter one, I have explained that ethics is reducible to what is good, bad, right and wrong or more specifically can be understood as "a systematic attempt through the use of reasoning to make sense of our individual and social moral experience in such a way as to determine the rules which ought to govern human conduct and the human values worth pursuing in life"⁶⁷. As can be seen from this definition, where there is no ethics, there is no rule of law as each does what s/he believes is right or good especially for him and not for the next person. This however, this does not mean to say ethics is equal to law but should complement each other.

Besides lack of the rule of law, a serious problem, egoism (either psychological or ethical or minimalist-economics/sociological egoisms) is likely to be cultivated resulting in multiple immoral activities such as corruption,

dictatorship or despotism (in the case of political leaders), embezzlement and all other “dog eat dog activities”. Max Stirner⁶⁸ was the first philosopher to call himself an egoist or to advance egoism. It is questionable if he wanted to install a new idea of morality (ethical egoism) or argue against morality (amoralism). Egoism is “a teleological theory of ethics that sets as its goal the benefit, pleasure, or greatest good of the one-self alone. It is contrasted with ethical altruism which does not strictly mean not being self-interested but includes in its goal the interests of others as well”⁶⁹. This to say for ethical altruism, moral agents have an obligation to help and serve others. Egoism can take any of the three varieties namely ethical, psychological or rational/minimalist. Ethical egoism (also simply called egoism)⁷⁰ is the normative ethical position that moral agents ought to do what is in their own best self-interest. This is the kind of egoism advanced by philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes. For Hobbes, “one ought to serve his own interests. Of course at first sight many actions appear to be for the benefit of others yet below the surface they arise from the sole motive of self-love”⁷¹. Ethical egoism differs from psychological egoism, which claims that humans by nature are motivated only by self-interest hence, people can only act in their self-interest. Thus for partisans of psychological egoism, any act, no matter how altruistic it might seem, is actually motivated by some selfish desire of the agent, for example, desire for reward, avoidance of guilt, personal happiness. Ethical egoism also differs from rational egoism, which merely holds that it is rational to act in one’s self-interest. For example, when working with certain economic, political or sociological models, we may frequently assume that people will act in such a way as to promote their own interests. Egoism and its opposite, altruism both contrast with ethical

utilitarianism, which holds that a moral agent should treat one's self (also known as the self or the ego) with no higher regard than one has for others (as egoism does, by elevating self-interests and "the self" to a status not granted to others), but that one also should not (as altruism does) sacrifice one's own interests to help others' interests, so long as one's own interests (i.e. one's own desires or well-being) are substantially-equivalent to the others' interests and well-being. Egoism, utilitarianism, and altruism are all forms of consequentialism, but egoism and altruism contrast with utilitarianism, in that egoism and altruism are both agent-focused forms of consequentialism (i.e. subject-focused or subjective), but utilitarianism is called agent-neutral (i.e. objective and impartial) as it does not treat the subject's (i.e. the self's, i.e. the moral agent's) own interests as being more or less important than the interests, desires, or well-being of others.

From the above elaborated understanding of egoism, it is clear that the socio-economic and political problems that have troubled Zimbabwe for the past decade or so have been partly a result of egoistic tendencies especially by the ruling ZANU (PF) and some of its government officials. Due to egoism and of course amorality, these have been deeply affected with redolence of profiteering at the detriment of tested humanistic political and economic values. As such, they have ignored the plights of the people who voted them into power and preoccupied with self-aggrandizement or self-enrichment. Amoralism is a belief that there is nothing wrong with egoism, but there is nothing ethical about it. One can simply adopt rational egoism and completely drop morality as a superfluous attribute of egoism.

Some scholars like Thomas Jefferson have criticized ethical egoism for cultivating immorality in society where it is

practiced. For him, ethical egoism is intuitively implausible for the simple reason that it is the basis for immorality. In a letter to Thomas Law in 1814, Jeffers writes:

Self-interest, or rather self-love, or egoism, has been more plausibly substituted as the basis of morality. But I consider our relations with others as constituting the boundaries of morality. With ourselves, we stand on the ground of identity, not of relation, which last, requiring two subjects, excludes self-love confined to a single one. To ourselves, in strict language, we can owe no duties, obligation requiring also two parties. Self-love, therefore, is no part of morality. Indeed, it is exactly its counterpart⁷².

In contrast, Rand Ayn saw ethics as a necessity for human survival and well-being, and argued that the social implications of morality, including natural rights, were simply a subset of the wider field of ethics. 'Thus, for Rand, 'virtue' included productiveness, honesty with oneself, and scrupulousness of thought. Although she greatly admired Jefferson, she wrote:

[To those who say] that morality is social and that man would need no morality on a desert island-it is on a desert island that he would need it most. Let him try to claim when there are no victims to pay for it, that a rock is a house, that sand is clothing, that food will drop into his mouth without cause or effort, that he will collect a harvest tomorrow by devouring his stock seed today-and reality will wipe him out, as he deserves; reality will show him that life is a value to be bought and that thinking is the only coin noble enough to buy it⁷³.

It should be remarked that ethical egoism is criticized not only by altruist philosophers; it is also at odds with the majority of religions. Most religions hold that ethical egoism is the product of a lack of genuine spirituality and shows an individual's submersion in greed. Religious egoism is a derivative of egoism, "whereby religion is used to validate one's self-interest"⁷⁴.

In Zimbabwe like elsewhere, a culture of egoism has proven precarious and intolerable as it has resulted in a cobweb of corruption at all levels of the society especially in the two decades following the formation of the GNU. I will not further devote more energy to discuss the lessons that Zimbabwe can learn from her own past experience. Instead, we will revisit the relationship between business and ethics but with a focus on elements of consumerism.

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Chapter Five

The Inextricable Relationship Between Business and Ethics Revisited

It has been argued in the preceding chapters that the interplay between ethics and business in general is indispensable if at all any business enterprise wants to gain a modicum of respect and stay in business. Otherwise it will lose people's interest and trust and be booted out. This chapter will pursue this practical belief in some detail. Various aspects of business, particularly elements of consumerism are critically analysed and weighed in view of business ethics.

The Indispensability of Ethics in Consumerism

In chapters one and two, the concepts of business, ethics and business ethics were critically analysed and the role of ethics in business and that of business in society explored. The ensuing paragraphs seek to show that business and ethics are not only compatible but indispensable. The indispensability is shown by examining the connection between ethics and basic business elements of consumerism. Consumerism is loosely defined as the increased outcry for consumer protection. For our purposes, a consumer is defined as the end user of products and services. The basic elements of consumerism like production, marketing, advertising and sales imply the need for regulatory principles to curb egoistic tendencies by some the key business players in the business world. In other terms, business key players such as workers, consumers, manufacturers, advertisers and salesmen necessarily need ethics to guide their conduct with others. This is simply because human beings are egoistic by

nature and have a tendency of serving their own interests arising from the sole motive of self-love (to use 'Thomas Hobbes' language). Yet this is what renowned philosophers such as Immanuel Kant and Joseph Butler criticize. Kant, for example, had it that, "the basis of obligation must not be sought in the nature of man or in the circumstances in the world in which he is placed but *apriori* simply in the conceptions of pure reason"¹. What Kant is arguing is that human beings (as key business players) should use their rationality to control their ego; otherwise one would run into the problem of ethical egoism. For this reason, when determining whether an act is good or bad, we should always consider one's intentions. For Kant, man must use a categorical approach that is, act from an intrinsic motive if he is to be moral. Transposing the Kantian view of ethics to business, it has the implication that all business players in any level of consumerism should act from a sense of duty in dealing with others. In other words, it is a prerequisite for every business dealer to consider others' interests, choices and needs in order to maintain social harmony, peace and tranquillity. For this to be successfully done, ethics understood in Kantian terms becomes a lubricant averting friction and guaranteeing mutual understanding among business people and the societies they serve.

Ethics and Production

Is it always binding that whenever a producer manufactures/produces his goods, he should consider the public interests, values and needs? At face value this question appears simple but at practical level it is not. This being the case, the question has for a long time boggled the minds of many, from the producers to the public, economists and

moralists but with little progress. Different people have treated it differently. Hobbes for instance relegates any notion which claims that there is an automatic link between profit and public good. As has been adumbrated in chapter four, he advances ethical egoism with which he contends that every person acts to meet his own personal interests. In substantiating this position, Hobbes posits that “one ought to serve his own interests. Of course at first sight many actions appear at to be for the benefit of others yet below the surface they arise from the sole motive of self-love”². Transposing this to production, Hobbes would be of the view that the manufacturer should produce his products in accordance to his own interests. There is no need to consider those of others as nature designed it that way. An alternative formulation of ethical egoism states that I ought to act in my own self-interest--even if this conflicts with the values and interests of others--simply because that is what I value most. It is not clear how an altruist could argue with such an individualistic ethical egoist, but it is also not clear that such an egoist should choose to argue with the altruist. Since the individualistic egoist believes that whatever serves his own interests is (morally) right, s/he will want everyone else to be altruistic. Otherwise they would not serve the egoist's interests. It seems, however that anyone who truly believe in individualistic ethical egoism could not promote the theory without inconsistency especially when it is transposed to business. Indeed, the self-interest of the egoist is best served by publicly claiming to be an altruist and thereby keeping everyone's good favour.

Given the logical inconsistencies associated with ethical egoism, should we seriously consider it when producing consumer goods? Obviously no! The fact that there are celebrated anti-trust cases world-wide against major

producing industries highlight the existence of moral problems associated with such egoistic tendencies as espoused by Hobbes when transposed to business. The existence of these problems shows that there is production ethics, that is, moral principles to be adhered to when producing goods for customers. Instances to substantiate this contention are many. Several customers in Zimbabwe for instance, have complained through the media that the kind of steel now being used to make wheelbarrows by Zimbabwe Monarch Industry is not as durable as purported by the industry through adverts. The wide use of low quality material in consumer goods such as plastics is another case in point. It is crystal clear that the use of plastics is cheaper in most cases than steel or aluminium. On one hand, a high quality durable plastic is often as expensive or nearly so, as a metal produce. Because of this and the economic squalors pervasive in Zimbabwe, many parts of appliances, automobiles, toys and containers are produced with fairly cheap plastic. Considerable evidence has also accumulated in the production of washing buckets and plastic cups.

Consequently, the use of fairly cheap plastic parts has compromised not only the durability but efficiency of the manufacturer's metal products. The above mentioned instances are all real economic moral dilemmas of a manufacturer in a fiercely competitive industry which normally faces pressure to cut corners on quality in order to survive by figuring out means for cutting manufacturing costs. The use of plastic parts is one obvious partial solution. In the long run however, the moral problem that the manufacturer faces is responsibility to the customer even if the prices are reduced. Pronouncing this problem more explicitly, Spurrier in *Ethics and Business* challenges consumer goods producers when he asks: "What good is a lower price if

the quality is poor?”³. Analysing the question raised by Spurrier, one is faced with difficulties in providing a sound and plausible answer. Nevertheless, one thing seems to be quite certain when looking at quality of production: honesty. The producer must be honest and always ensure high quality in production. If we decline this tenet, we shall not come up with any other at all. In fact, if we let the profit and survival serve as the only criteria for business neglecting the ethical tenets of honest and responsibility, then, the public is damned. But would the public relations department say yes to this situation?

It is in this light that one would argue it is high time for us people to come of age morally and acknowledge that this and similar situations are very complex economic and moral dilemmas and then try to do something about them. It seems true that many people are wrestling seriously with some of these moral dilemmas but it is perhaps important to thrust much on what the manufacturer should do in order to remain in harmony with the consumers whilst making profit as well. From a subjective perspective, for the manufacturer's business to survive, he has to understand that he is producing for human beings with equal rights to be protected health-wise, economically and from other deceptive means. For this reason, the manufacturer should make sure that his area of production is clean. Implements used should also be clean and up to common standards. Above all, goods produced should be safe, durable, reliable and efficient. All these conditions can only be satisfied if goods are tested before they are exposed to consumers, otherwise they would have adverse effects to consumers. This way, a high sense of manufacturer's moral responsibility is guaranteed. This fulfils Aristotle's dictum that , “a good thing(product) is that which serves its purpose in accordance with perfect virtue....The

virtue of a knife is to cut perfectly”⁴. A virtue according to this understanding entails that which enables anything to perform its function well or at its best. The function meant by Aristotle in view of production might be quality insurance and moral responsibility as well excellence in personal and social conduct with consumers and other business people. Aristotle’s dictum thus can serve to mean that there is production ethics since all businesses aspire to work towards perfect virtue. The cliché that “anything goes in business” and “the dog eat dog” way of survival thus has no ground whatsoever in business. In fact, where ethics or moral accountability is denied access to mingle with production, business grinds to a halt for consumers obviously shift to other manufacturers with better products and services as an alternative.

Critical questions arise at this juncture: “Is it not difficult when producing goods to measure quality since people have different tastes and attitudes? If what one considers to be low quality another person perhaps considers a high quality, isn’t it that the whole question of quality, though important, is made more abstract and unworthy of discussion?” In view of the projected questions, I think it would be prudent to consider the level of acceptability by the consumers which the manufacturer manufactures for-the targeted market. If the consumers are contented with the performance of the good, say, Datsun 1800 car models, then they are free to go for it and the manufacturer continues producing the good without any moral worry. All these business policy decisions are done with respect to both economic and basic ethical values of human freedom and dignity. Thus ethics and production as is seen in this discussion work hand in hand. They are not only compatible but indispensable if manufacturing business is to thrive and maintain a modicum of respect⁵.

Ethics and Marketing

Marketing is an important element of consumerism or business in general, because it is capable of promoting business expansion. However, the concept of marketing has been so widely debated that there is fear it might be reduced to a mere cliché. Several questions with regard to the concept have been raised but obtaining various responses: “How can businesses market their products and services if ethical principles have no place in business? Doesn’t it require good ethical conduct in marketing one’s goods?” These questions when carefully analysed presuppose the existence of ethics in marketing yet the existence of ethics in marketing is sometimes questioned. Nevertheless, before plunging into greater details, it is wise for us to unravel the concept “market” or “marketing”.

According to Guth, originally, the concept “market” generally stood for the place where buyers and sellers gathered to exchange goods and services⁶. And though it was generally submitted that the lifeblood of any business is finance, unethical sales methods and poor products in markets would result in customer resistance. It seems this understanding of what a market is and does still stands. Many business people the world-over are even now realizing that the key to success and to profitable business lies in identifying the needs and wants of the customers. This is perhaps due to due to ever-increasing competition in the business world. It is now a well-known thing for those doing “serious business” that business cannot survive solely on finance for there is more to business than profit. This realization signifies that there is great need to affect reality directly and take precedence over the oration of literature and theory in the

economic textbooks. Kotler and Armstrong in *Marketing: An Introduction* stress this need and seem to take a step towards this reality. They define marketing as “a social meaningful process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging ideas and products value with others”⁷. From this understanding and indeed that of the concept ‘market’, the contention that ethics and marketing do not coexist appears a chronic lie. Kotler and Armstrong make it clear that the most basic concept underlying marketing is human needs and wants. In this case, basic needs include physical and social necessities such as food, clothing, shelter, safety, affection/love, knowledge of the good and the bad, right and wrong as well as self-expression. This suggests that basic needs are not invented by marketers themselves. They are a basic part of the consumer’s fabric.

Related to Kotler and Armstrong’s understanding of marketing is Wilfred Guth. He understands marketing as “an economic and social order that upholds and fulfils basic ethical requirements as preservation of freedom and human dignity maintaining solidarity and safeguarding peace to a high degree”⁸. Critically analysing this definition, it can be noted that marketing only occurs when people decide to satisfy their needs and wants through relationships and exchange, in which case, exchange is the act of obtaining a desired product or service from someone by offering something in return. The product’s perceived performance therefore should match buyer expectations. If the product’s performance falls short of expectations, the buyer is dissatisfied and there might be a conflict or misunderstanding between the two parties. In this respect, business is understood as a human institution, and indeed is, which in its attempt to make profit is also obliged to consider other

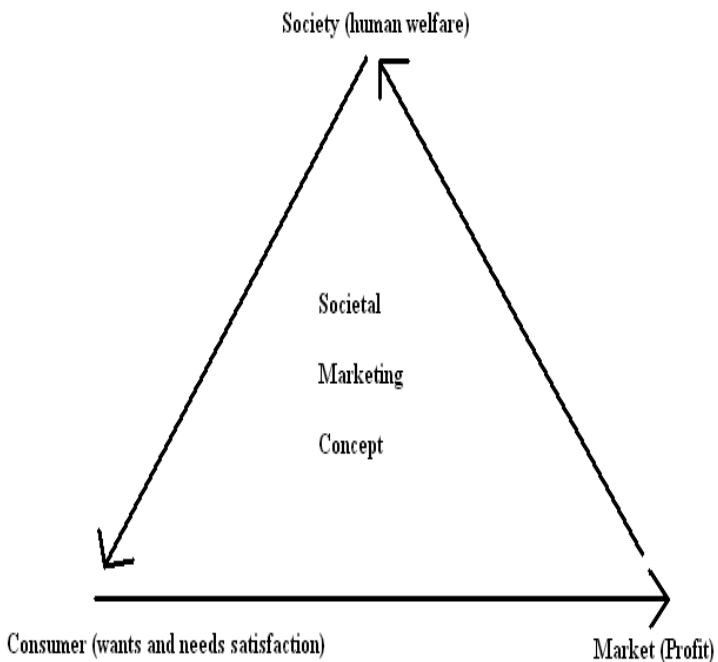
people's choices, interests and needs. Adding more weight on this notion, Ludwig Eahard and Alfred Muller Armark describe marketing as "a system more than an economic set of rules in which social concerns and free competition have been successfully combined"⁹. This is to say that a market is an interacting place where marketing (socialization) occurs. When marketing goods and services, then, certain values, that is, marketing ethics need to be observed besides the laws of supply and demand. The most important value in marketing goods is embedded in marketing ethics and this is truth. As such, marketers (those who market goods and services) are obliged to consider truth as their moral guide. This is to say that ethical techniques of conscientizing customers should be employed since the role of market is to facilitate business transactions whilst preserving the rights and entitlements of the customers by telling them the whole truth about the goods and services on market.

Contributing to the debate on the relationship between marketing and ethics, DeGeorge in *Developing Ethical Standards for International Business* argues that "the care needed in marketing involves gathering knowledge of and being sensitive to different customs, mores, ethical view points and cultural norms as the business concerned moves from country to country"¹⁰ or across national boundaries. Given this situation, one would ask whether business with such operative principles could withstand competition with other competitors who do not abide by the same principles. The answer to this is a yes! It has been discovered through research that if marketers market their goods and services with no regard for ethics, their businesses will undoubtedly find themselves in a set of serious crisis and lack of legitimacy. If unethical competition is permitted, business concerned will lose a modicum of respect and consequently

customers to other businesses which deal with the same products or services. Ultimately, business grinds to a halt. This denotes that when marketing goods and services, ethics should serve its purpose as a cushion to general business and customer problems. In Zimbabwe for example, full support is needed from every individual and customer body to ensure that marketing ethics are followed whenever marketers are marketing their goods and services. In view of Zimbabwe's endemic immoral business practices elaborated in the previous chapters, a revitalized, re-organized and formidable consumer council is needed to tackle head the ever increasing customers' grievances in their interaction with the market. This will in fact create a tradition that would help both marketers and consumers to rise from the dark depths of prejudice and misunderstanding to the majestic heights of moral and rational understanding and appreciation of business as socio-economic and not merely an economic entity.

The above line of thinking serves to mean that the so-called "societal marketing concept" should be practically given entrance into business. According to Kotler and Armstrong, the concept of "societal marketing" suggests that, "marketers should determine the needs, wants and interests of the targeted market through research, that is, through a systematic process of investigation, collection, analysis and reporting of data and findings for the sake of improving goods and services"¹¹. In other words, marketers should keep in touch from time to time with their customers through market research in order to understand what customers expect and market those expectations better than their competitors. This is to say that, there should be a direct interaction and mutual understanding between the marketers (in business) and the society (consumers). A symbiotic

relationship between the market and the society is fundamental here and should be well pronounced. This relationship however is only possible if the market provides goods and services to the society at a fair price and if the society in return offers due respect and motivation to the business market concerned. This entails that social interests and entrepreneurial interests should be balanced. The following diagram for societal marketing concept explains the interdependence of the market and the society:



As is shown by the diagram, societal marketing concept embraces up the view that business success and survival is guaranteed by satisfying customers' needs and wants .It raises for the marketers, ethical questions on resource shortages and distribution, economic stresses, neglected social services and

other such concerns which affect marketing of goods and services. In short, this sums up the whole idea behind marketing as maximizing long term profitability through central marketing function, that is, mutual exchange process and integration with other aspects of business like ethical codes in meeting consumers' needs and wants.

In a nutshell, the preceding explications stand to concretize the major premise that ethics and marketing do not only coexist but are necessarily indispensable.

Ethics and Advertising

The subject of advertising has been one of the principal preoccupations of scholars and business ethicists in the last few decades. This has been partly because of linguistic advertising strategies employed by some advertisers in business that have been received with a mixed feeling thereby mirroring world with a plethora of controversies. The controversies are further compounded by the nature of advertising discourse itself which many business ethicists believe is psychologically coercing, misinforming, cunning and void of ethical principles. Let us try to understand the concept of advertising before proceeding with our discussion.

According to George Benson¹² in his *Business Ethics in America*, advertising is understood as a form of communication by the retailer in order to let the public know what s/he has for them. This means that the means of communication is between two parties, the sender of the message and its recipient. The communication between the advertiser and the recipients (who in this case are the consumers) can be facilitated through the use of print or electronic media. It should be remarked that in the contemporary business world where competition is now

fierce, businesses of all magnitudes can only effectively operate if they make use of adverts to communicate with its customers. It is this realization that results in some advertisers embarking on unethical business advertising practices to outcompete their business adversaries in the business world. Thus though fundamental, advertising like any other aspect of business remains a fertile ground for controversy especially when we cast our eyes on how it is done by some business people and how it ought to be done.

Consequently, two outstanding camps have resulted from the controversy namely the pro-advertising and the con-advertising camps. Vices such as misinforming, coercing, cunning, deception and other such problems associated with advertising have invoked the anti- advertising camp to argue for banning of advertising. Advocates of this camp thus have considered advertising unethical. In anchoring this position one may cite the Zimbabwe Television 1 drama programme where adverts of surf coercively deprive one of his or her watching and listening pleasure. In fact, the adverts come in incessantly without excuse of the audience. So is the Palmolive soap advert where pictures of naked people are shown to the public. Such advert can be said to promote prostitution and disturbing the status quo in African societies such as Zimbabwe. Taking another African example, the Mozambican case, the Brazilian Universal church sponsored Mozambican television channel, *Mira Mar's* adverts of programs such as *Vai dar namoro* literally mean (Go and make love), *Gugu* and *Tudo é possível* (Everything is possible) have been criticized for being too much sexy and far stretching if we are to consider the Mozambican culture where the channel exists. In fact, these programs have numerous slashes of adverts with overwhelming sexual overtones- naked people (both men and women with only painted bodies) in the

public. This is a taboo in the Mozambican culture and by extension the African traditional culture in general¹³. These adverts, as with the Zimbabwean example given above irritate especially when one is watching with in-laws or his daughters such that con-advertising partisans have argued for their banning from the scene.

Besides the aspect elaborated above, it has been argued by some con-advertising partisans that adverts conceal truth. Instead of being informative as expected, they are misinforming and misleading to the consumers. Zimbabwe Independent Newspaper is a case in point. To attract customers, it uses an eye catching inscription on the top-right which reads: "the newspaper that makes a difference". The inscription in itself is not wrong. What frustrates however is the fact that in reading the newspaper you hardly find its difference with other newspapers like the Zimbabwe's *The Herald*, *Sunday Mail* and *Financial Gazette*. Thus one may think that the headline is not for purposes of informing the customers but of luring hence psychologically forcing them to buy it. On the same token, other advertisers in the country have tended to make use of imperatives, for example, pamphlets with an inscription on top in bold which reads: "Throw this away unread if you want to throw away a chance of success in your life". Such eye catching inscriptions always appeal to the eye and fill the reader with the curiosity to read more about it. What surprises and even disappoints is that, after reading the advert one can find out that his or her chances of success in life have not been enhanced in any way. This is sometimes considered as misinformation and so the advertiser is guilty of unethical practice that can seriously do down his business. In the Zimbabwean business world, the use of imperatives is increasingly wide spreading the advertising of herbal and spiritual healing services by

traditional medical practitioners as a way of luring potential customers. In locations like Mbare, High fields, Budiriro among others in the capital, Harare, the use of emotive language as: “We organize your life and make you reach in only 3 days’ time. Come before it is too late” are a common phenomenon. Such emotive language appeal to the audience’s emotions and sentiments thereby committing a fallacy known as “*argumentum ad misericordiam*” by raising sensitive issues. Good life is a desire for everyone. The adverts are therefore meant to arouse interest and desire in people from all walks of life. What worries most is if you happen to visit any one of these traditional medical doctors, nothing will happen that shows a positive change in your life. You will remain poor as before as and sometimes even worse than ever. In fact common sense tells us that if these adverts were true, then no one would be poor in Harare. Everyone would rally behind these traditional medical doctors for the charm. It is this naked reality that exposes advertising vulnerable to criticism. Thus reacting to such unethical practices, James Norris in his *Advertising* expresses suggests how adverts ought to be done. He makes it clear that “the advertiser should tell the whole truth about the product he wants to sell and should judge the message not by what it says but by what the reader is most likely to think it says”¹⁴. It is therefore arguments based on unethical practices that some critics have a cause for worry with regard to advertising to the extent that they vie for its banning from the Zimbabwean business landscape.

Other critics however take a different strand of thought with regard to the question of advertising. They argue that advertising is morally good in so far as it is informative (to potential consumers) of what the business market has. It also tells the consumers about price changes. For example, customers can be informed that 2kg of white sugar was 4U.S

dollars but is now 3U.S dollars or vice-versa. This justification for advertising is stressed by George Benson who remarks that “the main reason for informing or advertising is to create demand for new products and reduce costs of products since people rush for the cheaper”¹⁵. This explains that advertising serves a great deal of reminding and updating people of price changes of product goods that may have occurred. The nature, use and advantage of a product good can also be communicated to customers. This helps greatly in building a company’s image since advertising reduces customer’s anxiety in buying and in using certain products. Put differently, informing and reminding customers is not unethical since consumers expect information about actual product as it is. This is to say from a pro-advertising perspective, failure to advertise is not only unjust and unethical in itself but worries customers as it deprives them of possible changes in the market. Failure to advertise what the business is offering thus deprives customers of their right to information.

A critical analysis of arguments proffered by both the pro- and con-advertising partisans shows that they are flawed, implausible and therefore unworthy supporting. In fact, the positions taken by both camps (pro-and con-advertising) are narrow and extreme. Instead of supporting either of the perspectives, I think a moderate view which tries to reconcile both positions is to be supported and advanced. This view contends that advertising is neither good nor bad but its goodness or badness depends on how it is done¹⁶. For it to be considered good, then, the question about the ‘ought’ comes in. This proves ethics to be a “cushion” in advertising without which it is impossible to advertise for the good of both businesses and the public (consumers). Otherwise, the Cynics view that it is the money which the advertiser desires to get and the product which he wants to sell which can make the

advert bad and not the product itself would persist. All what the moderate view is contending is that unethical practices such as coercion, deception, manipulation, misinformation and other adverts with anti-social tenets should be given exit out of business to cleanse it. More so, advertisers are obliged and encouraged to consider the social norms and values of the society targeted, otherwise, they de-campaign the product they are meant to advertise. All this demonstrates that ethics in advertising (advertising ethics) is a necessity. Thus it is out of this understanding that advertising and ethics cannot be separated if any advert is to be meaningful and morally acceptable.

Ethics and Selling

There are several contentious ethical issues pertaining to how selling ought to be done. Yet there is need for us to understand the concept of sales if we are to meaningfully determine how it ought to be done.

Sales is the last element of consumerism. According to Sen in *“Does business and ethics make economic sense?”*, selling is loosely understood as a “mutual gainful exchange process”¹⁷ which usually involves two groups or individuals both of which know the nature and value of product to be exchanged. This denotes that goods have exchange values basically known as prices which can be expressed in terms of a sum of money. The question of value and nature of products to be exchanged generally makes selling a very large and complex moral problem. The question cannot be solved merely by affirming an automatic answer derived from a profit system but through philosophical analysis.

It is essentially important to spell out this complexity a little more precisely because it is often overlooked by

economists. When the issue of ethics and selling is raised, many people begin talking about how to develop better human relations inside business. Though for a long time the whole economic field of selling has been largely ignored in moral terms, it has proved a necessary ethical field to explore in so far as many people believe that the basic economic decisions in selling products are purely economic and have nothing to do with ethics. Of course, it can be agreed that there is no moral rule for selling products or services but is there not a moral limit to the amount of profit that any product or service must obtain? Can one say that, ten per cent is the moral profit margin for all products all times or say fifteen per cent may be necessary to pay off a previous bad year of deficits? All this sums to mean that the issues of profit though appear simple are necessarily a complex moral, economic question. I would consider a situation of the following sought by way of example to illustrate the moral complexity of the issue of profit. Suppose that 'Tren Tyre Zimbabwe Limited Company has a good year and makes enormous profits, is it not morally obliged to see whether or not it might fairly reduce the price of its product to the consumers? The usual response in such a case is to give bonus to the company employees and built up its reserves. This is not bad per se but is not that the company is being immoral in leaving out the public- consumers who bought the product for the company to have a good year? This entails that selling undoubtedly has many questionable social and moral implications. However, at the moment we are merely concerned with the moral effect upon exchange and pricing.

As has been shown, the distribution of economic goods has to be carried on by an organized system of exchange in which money serves as the measure of exchange value. This whole process of exchange is a tricking manifestation of the

social nature of man and his reliance upon effective system of co-operation with his fellows in order to satisfy his needs and wants. In a free economy where consumers have freedom of choice, it is worth understanding that the consumer is indeed 'the king'. It is his choice that largely determines what will be sold and the future of the business. However, the degree to which customers are influenced by sales is also to be traced and analysed in order to be either appreciated or otherwise. It is therefore relevant to familiarize oneself with the features of the pricing process before developing our theme by outlining additional moral obligations of buyers and sellers.

One has to note in passing that the pricing process must be based upon effective calculation of resources and needs of the customers. There should also be an enforcement of the best use of the scarce resources available for supplying demand. In fact, for prices of goods to be considered just, necessary equivalence between the value of what is supplied by the seller and that paid for by the buyer should be explicitly expressed. Affirming this notion, Aquinas proposed a selling principle that should be considered when a seller is determining the price of his goods. In his principle, Aquinas described any sale as "unlawful if a defect in the product sold is not disclosed to the buyer by the seller"¹⁸. This is to say that both the seller and the buyer should be aware of the quality of the product they want to exchange, either through barter (barter exchange) or in monetary terms. This knowledge would allow both parties to determine whether the exchange process is fair or otherwise. The existence of defect goods in the business market puts the buyer at risk if the defect is not communicated. Thus the existence of defect goods in the market points on to the necessity of business ethics-selling ethics- and indeed its indispensability in business.

It should be remarked at this juncture that the normal rate of interest and an ordered interaction between supply and demand in the market should be used as a guide for pricing. Such duly competitive market conditions make the forces of supply and demand push prices toward a natural equilibrium level which covers both social and economic dimensions. This will make prices morally just since the market will be sufficiently competitive to make it fully responsive to conditions of supply and demand.

However, a critical question arises here: "How do we measure equivalence between the value of what is purchased and the price to be paid?" Indeed this question remains the essence of the problem of price justice for both business and the consumer. The most satisfactory solution to this problem of pricing both from an economical and moral perspective is perhaps to be found in the organized market for goods and services. Related to this view is Winternberger's of understanding of the selling concept. In his *Morality and Business*, Winternberger argues from a theological view point that "moral theologians insist the welfare of society requires goods to be bought and sold for a just"¹⁹ or generally "affordable"²⁰ price. He further stresses that theologians like Aquinas infer their conclusion about price from the fact that men are destined by nature to live together in society. They must therefore help one another to meet mutual needs by exchanging the products of their labour at an affordable price.

Since it is the seller who supplies goods and services, his obligations have to be spelled out in greater detail than those of the buyer. In general, buyers are forced to rely heavily upon the skill, honesty and integrity of the seller. As such, the primitive rule of caveat emptor, that is, the "buyer beware" must be spelt null and void especially on the part of the seller.

To do this, the seller must make sure that goods exchanged are safe, that is, protected against dubious branding. They (goods) should also be durable, efficient and reliable in performing whatever they are designed for. Transactions which take place in exchange must also be equitable and transparently reflect equivalence between the value of what is given away and that which is received. Aquinas expressed such ideas quite clearly in his writings. He asserted that “buying and selling were instituted for the common good of both parties since each need the product of the other....Therefore, the contract between them should rest upon an equality of thing to thing....”²¹. St Thomas of Florence, a 14th century theologian, also alluded to the same view in his writings on business morality. He had some pertinent issues to say about price justice and so he insisted that “the value of an article rests on a threefold consideration; its intrinsic qualities, its scarcity and the desire which it arouses in a prospective purchaser. Thus a powerful horse has greater value for travel than a mule.”²² This explains that the ethics of selling codifies the requirement of justice in purchase and sale of specific various rights and obligations of buyers and sellers. The proper buyer- seller relationships should be guided by the injunction of the golden rule, “do unto others as you would want them to do unto you”²³ and hence the indispensability of selling ethics in business, particularly in selling of goods and services.

Notes

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3. Spurrier A.M., (1962). *Ethics and Business*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, p.68.
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5. Mawere M., (2010). "The Business of Business is Business?": *The Myth of Amoral Business and Business Practices in Zimbabwe*, Journal of Social Development in Africa, vol. 25(1) 270-282.
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9. Ludwig Eahard and Alfred Muller Armark cited by Guth W., (1993). "A Crisis of Progress," in Minus M.P., *The Ethics of Business in Global Economy*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Ohio, p.27.
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16. Mawere M., (2010). “*The Business of Business is Business?*”: *The Myth of Amoral Business and Business Practices in Zimbabwe*, Journal of Social Development in Africa, vol. 25(1) 270-282.
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22. Guth W., “A Crisis of Progress,” in Minus M.P., (1993). *The Ethics of Business in Global Economy*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Ohio, p.79.
23. See, Matthew 7:12; see also Luke 6:31, *The Holy Bible, King James Version*, (1984), International Bible Society, Colorado, USA.

Chapter Six

Dispelling the Myth of Amoral Business from the Zimbabwean Business Landscape

In chapter two, we discussed the myth of amoral business. However, though we criticized and argued for a vote of no confidence on the myth, we didn't go further discussing how the myth can be dispelled from the business world especially in those countries like Zimbabwe where it has spread roots. This chapter therefore focuses on how the myth of amoral business can be dispelled from the corridors of Zimbabwean business landscape to oblivion. Nevertheless, before advancing a case for the integration of ethics into business which contention is directly opposed to "the myth of amoral business," the chapter considers why it is necessary to promote and integrate an ethical culture in business and how this can be made possible. This is done with particular focus on the Zimbabwean business landscape though some examples are drawn from outside. In order to successfully achieve this, it is first acknowledged that the Zimbabwean business sector lacks business ethics perhaps due to the socio-economic and political crises that have translated into scarcity of basic commodities. Yet this work advances the idea that it is always pertinent even where basic commodities are scarce and political crisis is at its height to remain ethical in all spheres of life, business included. This thesis is advanced on the realization that unethical business practices have the potential to cause untold hardships and excruciating pains to the society in which the business organization is operating and bad image to the organization itself. On the part of the society in general one may imagine how many workers (from the society) would lose their jobs if a business

organization closes simply because a business manager stole the organization's money resulting in its subsequent closure! How much pain does this clandestine act of a business juggernaut cause to the entire workers and their families or rather to the entire society? It is such kind of unethical business practices, among others that warrant the need to argue for the dispelling of the myth of amoral business which does not regard the legitimacy of ethics in business.

Promoting Ethical Practices in Business

It is unfortunate that in the recent years, in Zimbabwe and the world-over, we have witnessed many examples of business leaders getting in trouble for allegedly involved in scandals or bending the rules for personal aggrandizement. This has triggered a critical question on whether business ethics should be compulsorily taught in all schools, especially Business Schools (B-Schools) all over the world. The transgressions have also sparked renewed calls for business organizations and members of the public to limit their confidence in business leaders and business people respectively. It has become common knowledge that in order to restore sanity and a modicum of respect in the business sector the world-over, it is mandatory for all business organizations, independent organizations, the government and consumer watchdog organizations to collectively work together and revise codes of conducts in the business fraternity and firmly stand against all forms of immoral business practices. The latter can be achieved by indiscriminately persecuting all transgressors regardless of colour, race, societal position/rank, religion or any other segregational criteria. Having discussed, though briefly, why it has become a necessity to give exist the myth of amoral

business from the business world, let us examine how the myth can be ousted.

Separating Business from National Politics

I have argued in chapter four that political despotism would almost always extend its dictatorial tendencies to the running of the economy in the form of, among other things, controlling prices of basic commodities and dictating those managing the national economy on what to do. More so, I have argued in the previous section that unethical business practices, especially by business managers and politicians have the potential to cause untold hardships and excruciating pain to the general populace yet in reality the practices are a clandestine arrangement of some political juggernauts in government who, though lurking around the corridors of power, utilize it for personal enrichment. On the contrary, a political democracy almost always is quite comfortable with a free market system where individuals and business operators/organizations freely trade their products and services with buyers without any political threats from those in power. It is in this light that there should be a clear cut difference between business and politics as these are two different domains, though at times should interact, but only for the good of each other.

One may still wonder if this kind of situation would bring any growth to the national economy besides that business operators and consumers trade freely without any political interference from politicians. It should be noted that a free market economy as opposed to a command economy have numerous advantages not only to business operators and buyers but to the national economy of course with some disadvantages just like any other system of economy. A free

market (also called a market economy or a free enterprise economy) is an economic system in which the production and distribution of goods and services take place through the mechanism of free markets guided by a free price system¹. In a market economy, businesses and consumers decide of their own volition what they will purchase and produce. They also determine the price of their products in view of the production costs incurred and competing prices of the same product in the market. Technically, this means that the producer gets to decide what to produce, at what quantities, what to charge to customers for those goods, what to pay employees, etc., and not the government. These decisions in a free-market economy are influenced by the pressures of competition, supply, demand and production costs. This is often contrasted with a command economy (also known as a planned economy), in which a central government decides what will be produced, in what quantities and at what price is the product to be sold. Of course, no pure market economy exists so far. Almost all economies in the world today are mixed economies which combine varying degrees of market and command economy traits. For example, even in the United States of America which is considered to be champions of free market, there are still many areas of government control, though of course fewer areas than in Western European countries, Africa and Asia.

The advantages of a free market economy are for example – supply and demand. A free market economy is driven by individual innovation and the notion that hard work and ingenuity will be rewarded by success. All businesses exist to make a profit. Therefore, in the free market system, a successful business makes a consistent profit in a field of competitors. The concept of competition is an important component of a free market system. A free market

economy thus allows competition between business players and where there is competition; prices are likely to be naturally kept low. Quality of goods that are produced by the manufactures is also likely to be high. This is because businesses know that poor quality and high prices where there is fierce competition result in business being deserted as customers have a wide range of choice. In contrast, where there is no competition, prices would be a lot higher and quality of products compromised. This is due to monopoly, an economic situation where there is a sole provider of goods or services. The best ways to gain more customers are lower prices and high quality. This is the greatest advantage of having a free market economy as compared to a command economy (think communist). In a command economy, there is no one to compete against so you can charge as much as you want for your products. Consumers will always buy the products as there will be no alternative. No wonder why, for the past decade or so, in Zimbabwe, prices of goods have been going up day and night, a situation that resulted in the 2007 Operation Reduce Prices. Due to national economic meltdown, fewer producing companies remained in business. Also, among those few most preferred to export their products abroad where they would fetch higher prices. Consequently, there was scarcity of basic goods in the country resulting in the so-called black market with its soaring prices.

As such, a free market economy almost always has advantages over a command economy. Besides embracing democratic principles in business, the system is likely to increase investors' confidence, lure more foreign investment and donor funding thereby increasing cash inflows in the country. These three factors are the pillar of economic

growth of any national economy. In short, the major advantages, among others, of a free market are:

1). There is capital flows to where it will get the greatest return, expanding the total size of the economy to its maximum level.

2). Supply and demand are closely linked: Someone who has a good idea or product can quickly put it into the market so that it is available to those who want it. Conversely, when a certain type of product is desired by enough people, it is a simple matter for someone to provide it.

3). In a market economy, it is easier for someone with initiative and virtue to create a better life for themselves and their family; economic freedom makes it easier to transform hard work and perseverance into material wealth.

4). There is embracing of ethical practices by all business key players, from the producer to the retailers, as there is natural fear for being booted out of business as a result of competitors who are conduct their business in an ethical manner. Competition in the marketplace thus provides the best possible ethical conduct in business key players at all levels.

5). Competition in the marketplace provides the best possible product to the customer at the best price. When a new product is invented, it usually starts out at a high price, once it is in the market for a period of time, and other companies begin to copy it, the price goes down as new, similar products emerge. In a competitive market, the poor versions of the product or the overpriced will be pushed out of the market because consumers will reject them.

All these summarized points in favour of a free market economy are indicators that the latter has a tendency of promoting a positive growth of a national economy by containing 'business enemies' like inflation. In Zimbabwe, such positive results have manifested themselves, though not fully due to partial implementation of the GPA, immediately after the formation of the GNU in February 2009. Lack of full implementation of the GPA that gave birth to the GNU has to a greater extent continued mothering the crux of socio-economic criminalities in the business world thereby downplaying efforts to fully democratize the Zimbabwean political and economic systems that indeed would give rise to a revitalized, blooming economy.

Teaching Business Ethics in Schools

It is a truism that business ethical practices are increasingly deteriorating the world-over. As such, there has much discussion over the decline of ethical practices on a global scale. In the recent past, for example, we have witnessed a proliferation of well-publicized scandals involving corporate dishonesty, deception, embezzlement and cheating, such as the cases involving internationally established U.S.A companies like Global crossing and WorldCom. Other recent scandals in the United States include the Watergate scandal and the Enron saga. The problem however, has not been peculiar to the developed world. In developing world like Zimbabwe we recently have among others, the Noczim, the Harare City Council, the ZUPCO and the Grain Marketing Board sagas. This demonstrates that unethical practices like corruption are not new to human nature neither is it just a Third World phenomenon or vice versa. They are a common feature in both developed and developing worlds. What is

more disturbing and worrying is their rampantness in today's business world. One big question raised by many critical minds is: "Are all the people involved in scandalous and unethical business practices unaware of the existence and place of ethics in business?"

It seems quite obvious that most of the managers and business entrepreneurs today have studied or heard of the importance and place of business ethics in any business or organization. As such, the issue of what might be lacking in the top executives of such big internationally established companies is yet another million dollar question. Could it be money to support their families? Or could it be that they never studied or heard of business ethics? It appears neither of the two possibilities is true. Most of these top officials are rich and some with Masters or even Doctorates in Business Studies – a clear indication that they have studied business ethics. These realities are making many people, including members of the public and college students, to be even more disturbed by the recent corporate scandals. Commending in the *San Diego Union-Tribune* of 15 December 2004, Craig Barkacs pointed out that:

The cases of scandals and corruption are not exactly gray areas, and it would seem the individuals involved certainly know when they cross the line. Most of us know right from wrong at a very young age, and by adulthood, have developed the tools to figure our way through most ethical issues we are likely to face².

For Barkacs, successful intelligent business people make what are obviously bad ethical judgments not because they do not know what is bad and good. It is because of "super optimism" and a "sense of entitlement"³. Super optimism is

“the notion that anything is possible and the transgression will go undetected”⁴ and a sense of entitlement is whereby an individual feels s/he has worked hard to earn special treatment and various rewards. S/he deserves them, and the regular rules just don’t apply. Thus for Barkacs, certainly nothing, even business ethics teaching, can stop an individual who willingly crosses the line to satisfy motivations such as greed. This should not be mistaken to mean that Barkacs is against the teaching of business ethics in business schools. He recognizes the advantages of including business ethics in a school curriculum. In this light, Barkacs argues that:

One of the first things business ethics training can do is teach people to recognize when they are rationalizing. It can equip potential managers with tools that encourage ethical decision-making in the workplace by objectively analyse their decisions before action”⁵.

For him and rightly so, with training, it is possible to be more self-critical, to ask: “If I weren’t making this decision. If I were on the other side of this, how would it appear? Would I prescribe the same course of conduct?”⁶

Experts in business and academic circles have suggested that the numbers and magnitude of such scandals are not simply the result of ethical failings of a few “rotten apples”⁷. In fact, opinion polls now place business people in lower esteem than that of politicians⁸.

While I agree with Craig Barkacs, among other things, that business ethics should be taught, I disagree with him that business leaders are involved in scandalous and unethical business practices simply because of “super optimism” and a “sense of entitlement”. This is because business leaders know very well that unethical business practices, whether detected

or not, are intolerable in business. They are also aware that their business at one time or another are audited and if anything goes wrong, they should be accountable and the consequences, legal or otherwise, of being involved in unethical practices especially with the positions they hold are shameful and humiliating. Thus from a subjective perspective and in view of these realities, it seems lack of “virtue” in most of today’s business leaders is leading them, knowingly, to be involved in unethical and scandalous business practices. It is important perhaps to have an appreciation and meaning of the concept of virtue, before any serious attempt to examine its experiences within the business context in general and in particular Zimbabwe’s. The idea that humans possess certain virtues formed a common thread in Socrates’ teachings. According to Socrates, these virtues represent “the most important qualities for a person to have, foremost of which were the philosophical or intellectual virtues as he stressed virtue was the most valuable of all possessions; the ideal life was spent in search of the Good”⁹. Thus Socrates believed that truth lies beneath the shadows of existence and so, it is the job of the philosopher to show the rest how little they really know. A virtue according to a subsequent and renowned philosopher, Aristotle is “that which enables anything to perform its function well or at its best”¹⁰. This understanding is captured in Aristotle’s famous dictum that “a good thing(product) is that which serves its purpose in accordance with perfect virtue....The virtue of a knife is to cut perfectly”¹¹. The purpose in accordance with perfect virtue meant by Aristotle in view of human conduct, both in the business world or otherwise, might be an impartial fulfilment of societal obligation(s) by all members of a given society. This has however invoked yet another serious question- a question that has troubled great minds since that

time of Aristotle or even before: “Can virtue and business ethics be taught?” so as to determine the importance of teaching virtue ethics in schools.

Recent studies by graduates of the top Business Schools (B-Schools) in the United States, in particular, Alvin Rohrs. CEO of Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE), conceded that ethics can and should be taught, otherwise today’s B-Schools’ students will be the future’s criminals. Teaching of ethics to such students is therefore a necessity. According to SIFE:

There is lack of understanding about ethics and ethics are applied in real life. We have to get young people to stop and think about ethics and the decisions they are making, otherwise, today’s students may be tomorrow’s criminals¹².

A similar study revealed that the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) has supported the teaching and inclusion of business ethics in B-Schools curricula as early as the 1980s¹³. However, over time, ethics courses have been disappearing slowly from many B-Schools programs as Masters in Business Administration (MBA) programs have been redesigned¹⁴. This has almost been the same in Zimbabwe where business ethics even today is mainly taught to philosophy students and Business students on optional basis not as a compulsory course. This could be considered as marginalization of business ethics. It has been suggested by some business ethics teachers that this marginalization of business ethics in favour of other “hard” business topics is one of the reasons for the deterioration of ethical conduct in business today¹⁵. This squarely supports the thesis that business ethics as with virtue can be taught, failure of which may result in B-School graduates acting unethically

simply because they were neither exposed to the ethical dilemmas inherent in many situations in which they eventually find themselves in the business world or taught how to engage in ethical decision making in such situations. As such, it is the contention of this work that B-Schools should be given the full responsibility to compulsorily teach business ethics as they do other hard core business courses like Micro-economics and Financial Analysis, among others. No wonder, Dean William Christie of Vanderbilt remarked “if courses in ethics are not already part of a B-School’s curriculum, they had better be soon”¹⁶. The remark by Vanderbilt relates with McCabe, Dukerich and Dutton’s research results that psychology literature support the argument that education is one of the most consistent and powerful correlates to the development of moral judgment in individuals. It also relates with Nonis and Swift’s argument that an individual’s values affects his or her ethical decision making. And because values can be taught, ethical practices can be influenced¹⁷ as well by way of teaching. All these arguments support Socratic position that educators, in so far as they are considered role models, have the powers to influence behaviour of their students and the society at large. Thus if virtue as with business ethics can be influenced by business ethics teachers in B-Schools then it can be taught directly or otherwise. In fact, it appears arguing that virtue and business ethics cannot be taught is the same as arguing that human being learn everything naturally and so there is no point of us going to school to learn mathematics, for example. If mathematics can be taught and change one’s mind in a way, then business ethics can be as well taught and with the possibility of causing similar results. As such, in today’s demanding business environment, it is imperative for business schools and business leaders to articulate ethics

policies in their institutions. The marketplace demands ethical behaviour, and business leaders who practice it will see their companies reap rewards over the long term, both for their organizations and the society they are serving.

In an article entitled: *Should Schools teach business ethics* by Zimvest¹⁸, several reasons were given as the causes for the rampant prevalence of unethical business conduct in Zimbabwe today as in other countries. Among them were the following:

- 1). Some people have blamed failure on families, schools, and religious organizations to groom children as they grow up.

- 2). Others blame the disenfranchising and de-humanizing colonial system, which alienated the majority of blacks from property ownership.

- 3). The colonial system was designed merely to accommodate blacks as labourers in factories, farms, and shops, thus entrenching and reinforcing the supposition that stealing from employer or from the alienated production processes was honourable.

- 4). The alienating colonial economic system was further accused of creating in the minds of black urban dwellers who migrated from their rural homes in search of employment in cities the prejudicial pretentiousness that ethical values or hunhu/ubuntu is for those living in the rural areas. In town, the overarching and revered value is 'making money' never mind the means used to make that money. Popular insinuations like "*takanyu kuHarare kuzoitira mari*" (we came to Harare to make money) and "this is Harare my friend" were thus coined in that context.

If I am to share my views, I am convinced that these, among others, are contributing factors causing the current

unethical lapses in Zimbabwe. However, I remain convinced that the heightened business scandals at national and international levels should be immediately dealt with using, among other mechanisms, teaching of business ethics in schools. Put differently, the teaching of business ethics in schools, high schools included, should be seriously considered so as to catch the potential business people “young”. This can arrest the high levels of unethical business practices in today’s society as formal ethics training introduces business leaders to the different levels of moral reasoning. In B-Schools in the country, business ethics can be integrated, among other courses, into MBA programs, Accounting, Economics, Business Management, Marketing and Finance to strengthen ‘business leaders’ powers of moral reasoning. This enables businesspeople to be more conscious of the possible outcome of decisions they are making and gives them a framework for selecting the best course of action when confronted with problems of various dimensions in their organizations.

Business Ethics Workshops: A Panacea to Revive Zimbabwe’s Business Ethical Culture?

The teaching of business ethics should not end at high school and college. It should continue even when one leaves school, but in form of business workshops, seminars and conferences especially for the business leaders and business people in general. According to Intalex¹⁹, *Business Workshop* is a marketing advisory group focused on improving the financial situation of small to large sized companies with a specialty in Self Care. In other words, Business Workshop is a consumer health and self-care expert that helps companies discover and leverage opportunities in self-care with our

proprietary health and self-care consumer knowledge and information.

In a workshop by Keith Little for local business owners on Educational Ecommerce Workshop, Little had this to say:

I teach the businesses owners in this workshop what they need to know to learn how they are losing tons of money! In case you were wondering...This is not a sales pitch. I really do teach the business owners in these workshops what they need to know to succeed with their businesses. There are some new systems that have come out and they will learn things that will that help them cut their advertising expenses and increase their profit simultaneously. I can personally help only so many business owners and yet almost all are struggling and most are losing thousands of dollars and don't YET know it. That's why I do these workshops for business owners. Even if you learn and apply just one thing you can see a dramatic difference in your businesses profitability. But you have to come to the workshops to learn what this idea is²⁰.

From Little's words, it can be noted that business workshops have unimaginable advantages. For someone with a business enterprise, attending workshops or seminars related to it can help him/her in achieving more as a result of other business people's achievements and endeavours. Workshops that deal with matters related to business actually have been going around for years. They are considered as one of the oldest forms of marketing technique and also they promote interpolation of ideas amongst entrepreneurs and business owners. This is because in a workshop, there are usually speakers that are considered experts in the field or

topics they will present. A workshop can last up to a number of days with scheduled activity all throughout such that participants have the mandate to choose which ones to attend among the events. Actually there are more advantages than there are disadvantages when it comes to attending workshops. In short the advantages of workshops can be summarized as below:

1). When you attend a workshop you will gain some knowledge about the topic given by speakers that are good in their field. You will be able to get and access the materials used and can even ask questions in an interactive manner. In other words, attending workshops relating to businesses can help you achieve more when it comes to your business, and can definitely give you insight about your business with the help of knowledgeable speakers.

2). You can also meet different people, new and old, with the same interest as yours therefore broadening your social network.

3). You can get tips and trivia with regards to any matter relating to business, for example, tips on how to start a new business (i.e. conducting a market analysis, analysing your competition to create a competitive advantage, developing a business plan, protecting your business with patents, copyrights, and trademarks and creating a strategic plan) managing your finances (i.e. preparing balance sheet and managing your cash flows) and managing your business (i.e. personalization strategies to attract and retain customers, advertising your business and building your brand etc.).

4). If you don't have time to read then this is a venue to learn about a specific subject in detail.

5). Seminars happen in good hotels. Some even offer accommodations for free so you can take advantage of it²¹.

The Compatibility of Business Ethics and the Principles of African Communalism

As has been discussed in the previous section of this chapter, the high prevalence of unethical and scandalous business practices in Zimbabwe, and by extension Africa and the world-over, are attributed to several reasons. In what appears a misconception, some may want to cite the incompatibility of business principles with the principles of African communalism, especially in countries like Zimbabwe where communitarian life style is still adhered to. It is important perhaps to have an appreciation and meaning of the concept “African communalism,” before any serious attempt to examine its experiences within the Zimbabwean business context.

African communalism is “a state of affairs whereby individuals in the society consistently pursue certain fundamental virtues on the basis of enhancing a common social good”²². In other words, it is a social structure which pervades traditional Africa in which every member voluntarily cooperates for the good of the whole society. Each is proud and much socially obliged to help any other member of his or her community. Nonetheless, Kaphagawani argues that to assert African communalism (and the authoritarianism of the elders) is not in any way to imply that traditional Africa knows no concept of the individual. In philosophical terms, individuality may be generally referred to as metaphysical freedom. David Bidney, however, understands individuality as “the autonomous power of choice and decision of will as essential conditions for the exercise of other freedoms”²³. Individuality understood this way entails the essence of a human being, notwithstanding any form of constraint, control or influence; it is inherent in human nature and

survives any form of external influence to one's self or conscience. This still concedes with African communalism in so far as for the African scholars surveyed, with the possible exception of Ghanaian philosopher Kwame Gyekye, regard African concepts of the individual and self to be almost totally dependent on and subordinate to social entities and cultural processes²⁴. Agreeing with Gyekye, Senegalese philosopher Leopold Senghor regards traditional African society to be based both on the community and on the person and in which, because it was founded on dialogue and reciprocity, the group has priority over the individual without crushing him, but allowing him to blossom as a person²⁵. Kenyan theology professor John S. Mbiti, for example, believes that the individual has little latitude for self-determination outside the context of the traditional African family and community. He writes:

Whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual. The individual can only say: "I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am"; this is a cardinal point in the understanding of the African view of personhood²⁶.

Picking it from Mbiti's understanding and indeed so; Africans acknowledge the independent existence of each and every person in their communities but in a way that promotes unity, oneness and harmony. African communalism presumes pluralism in that it is essentially a voluntary pooling together of independent and differing efforts and capabilities that makes the African communal life what it is. Moreover the young are not ontologically less human than the elders but have their freedom as individuals. According to Tempels

cited in Kaphagawani²⁷, the name is the very reality of the individual that differentiate one from the other.

From the understanding of African communalism elaborated above, it is clear that the high levels of unethical and scandalous business practices rampant in Africa and in particular, Zimbabwe over the past two decades or so is incompatible with the principles of African communalism. In fact, African communalism correctly understood squarely dovetails with the principles of business ethics which embraces and cherishes certain fundamental virtues on the basis of enhancing a common social good like cooperation for the betterment of the whole society. Unethical business practices therefore cause, directly or otherwise, unnecessary drawbacks not only to the organizations where the “bad apples” are contracted, but also to the society where the latter [“bad apples”] are also members.

Concurring with Mbiti and the understanding of the relationship between business ethics and African communalism, South African philosophy professor Augustine Shutte²⁸, cites the Xhosa proverb: *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (a person is a person through persons). He elaborates that: “This (proverb) is the Xhosa expression of a notion that is common to all African languages and traditional cultures”²⁹. It cuts across all African cultures and indeed relates with the understanding in business ethics that businesses should serve the needs and interests of the other-the people they are serving. This is what Wood urges when he posits that, “businessmen require an understanding of the role of business in society, its relations with the external environment and the powers and obligations that businessmen have as a result of these roles and relationships”³⁰. Wood can be seen to be arguing that business people have a double edged role, which is, to look inside and outside the business, organizing

staff, monitoring production and inquiring into the needs of employees and markets. This will enable them to identify external threats to the business and also notice changes in social expectations placed upon them by consumers or the public in general. Such an understanding of what is happening inside and outside the business' boundaries would help businessmen to meet their responsibilities and use their powers more wisely for the good of both their business and the society they serve.

As spelt out above, it is inescapably true that in the African context and indeed other contexts where people share the same idea of personhood and communal life, engaging in unethical business practices is violation of the public trust; it is a complete failure to exhibit the prime duty and responsibility to other members of their community. It is thus not only morally unjustifiable and incompatible with the principles of business ethics and African communalism but also unfair and unjust to other members of the community. This is so because in any society (where people have the common goals) each member has his duties and responsibilities which s/he should accomplish with all the cogency, dedication and efficiency for his good and the good of the society. This relates well with Okot p' Bitek's analysis of the African people when he says "man is not born free to do whatever he wants: in fact it is not desirable to be so, even if it were possible"³¹. This is to say that an African is born with duties and obligations or responsibilities to his society and society in turn bestows rights and privileges on its members. Picking it from this understanding one can argue the duties and obligations of business people in the African context is to honestly and earnestly serve the society with goods and services. In return, society has the duty and obligation to pay a "fair price" for the products and services

offered by business to ensure its progress. The fair price is the right and privilege society is bestowing on its members, in particular the business people. This should be done with the business people in mind that the values of individuals and individual rights, for example, are normally overridden by the values and rights of the community as a whole (to which the individual belongs) but not in a sense to oppress or repress individual freedom but embrace communal values³².

Concluding Remarks: On Behalf of Business and Business Ethics

All practical philosophies, business ethics included, are complex to study. It is hard enough to resolve rationally most of the business moral dilemmas arising in the business world, worse still, to totally eradicate scandalous and unethical business practices from the business landscape. One would even think it is chasing the wind or rather a waste of time to make an attempt to eradicate unethical business practices from the business world as these are as old as human history. The common argument raised is unethical business practices have always been in existence since time immemorial and will continue to exist even beyond our time. In fact, celebrated scholars of all times like Plato and Aristotle failed. Why not us?

To this kind of thinking, I disagree. On behalf of business and business ethics, I feel obliged to say that moral questions relating to business are not everyone's taste. It remains a truism however that moral curiosity and quest for understanding the good and the bad, the right and the wrong are a worthy and even sometimes a noble human characteristic. This is what David Hume meant when he correctly observed: "It is almost impossible for the mind of

man to rest, like those of beasts, in that narrow circle of objects, which are the subject of daily conservation and action”³³. When we venture of such a narrow circle, we unavoidably bump into questions of moral/ethical nature of which business ethics questions are a part; human beings can hardly eschew making some judgments about themselves, other human beings and the world around them. Business forms part of the whole [world]. This exercise of making judgment is the beginning of moral reasoning. As such, though acknowledging that business ethics is a contested terrain especially in the face of the myth of amoral business elaborated in this work, this book has tried to make a judgment on the general and African conception of business and business ethics. It has exposed the different dimensions that it has assumed as it was constructed and evolved over the years in Africa and beyond. It is my conviction that the preceding discussion might not take us far toward a deep and comprehensive understanding of business and business ethics especially in a political, economic state of crisis like that of Zimbabwe before the formation of the GNU, if not still in the present. However, I remain hopeful that enough has been said, at least, to help understand its underpinnings and judge how business and business ethics in such a “state” can be reconstructed and carried to posterity. More importantly my fervent hope is that enough has been said to encourage readers to take stock of their favoured view of business and business ethics in a political, economic state of crisis and to seriously consider the possibility that the representation I made in this book may, in some respects, be in need of revision. It goes without saying that mistakes are common. No doubt, my position in this book may contain mistakes and my own representation of business and business ethics in general and in particular Zimbabwe and other such national

economies in a political, economic state of crisis is in a distressing number of ways incomplete and of course in many ways in transition and possible process of protection. I invite the reader to bring this to light. However, some of my moral beliefs paraded in this book seem to me both well founded and unlikely to require revision.

In view of African traditional culture, the work has emphasized that the general and indeed African view of business and business ethics are premised on mutual dependence, socialization into the values of a community (African communalism) and the biblical injunction –the so-called “the Golden Rule,” commonly phrased in English as “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”³⁴ with a similar form appeared in a Catholic catechism around 1567 (certainly in the reprint of 1583). This Christian dictum which seem, today, to be the basis of both African communalism and business ethics in many cultures the world-over was adopted from two edicts, found in Leviticus 19:18 “Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbour as yourself” and the Great Commandment as well as Leviticus 19:34 which says: “But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God”³⁵. Leviticus 19:34 universalizes the edict of Leviticus 19:18 from “one of your people” to all of humankind. African traditional culture or rather African communalism thus shares a classical tradition which stresses that business and business ethics are human oriented activities, hence public matters and not private choices insofar as they involve our conception of how we ought to behave, conduct ourselves and live together in an ideal society.

In the light of this understanding, public policy on political and business matters should reflect on how citizens ought to behave and act. However, it is acknowledged that all that needs to be said on business and business ethics in general and in particular on Zimbabwe cannot be said in such a small text as this, but I believe the book has done enough to ignite more discussion on the conception of business and business ethics in a political and economic state of crisis; to call for the reversal of the myth of amoral business and other unethical business practices that have jeopardized the healthy state of business enterprises and the public in general in Zimbabwe and by extension Africa and beyond. It is therefore high time that the myth of amoral business and other unethical business practices that for a long time have haunted and remained the talk of the debate on business the world-over should be ousted. It is my fervent hope that such a bold step if seriously considered by African countries like Zimbabwe and businesses the world-over will revive the business fraternity on issues to do with decision making, social and personal conduct. It would set a good, historic example to the world and re-direct the pejorative images of business today into the chambers of oblivion; it would restore the sanity, a modicum of respect and the once lost confidence in business persons by members of the public.

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THIS IS AN ENGAGED AND EXTREMELY WELL-INFORMED BOOK ON BUSINESS AND BUSINESS ETHICS IN A SOCIETY WITH POLITICAL AND SOCIAL-ECONOMIC CRISES. AS AN ENGAGING AND ENGAGED EFFORT TO BRING A NEXUS BETWEEN BUSINESS ETHICS AND BUSINESS PRACTICES IN ANY HUMAN SOCIETY, THE BOOK INVITES THE READER TO PARTAKE IN PRESSING DEBATES ON BUSINESS ETHICS IN TIMES OF CRISIS. THE BOOK PROVIDES A MUCH NEEDED INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH AND MARSHALS AN EXTRAORDINARY ARRAY OF SOCIAL AND INTELLECTUAL RESOURCES THAT POSITIVELY INSPIRE BUSINESS PEOPLE AND BUSINESS MAKING. IT IS WHOLESOME AND SYSTEMATIC IN ITS ARTICULATION OF THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL FORCES THAT SHAPE AND ARE SHAPED BY BUSINESS. ADDITIONALLY, IT GIVES THE READER A GUIDED TOUR INTO THE FASCINATING CREATIVITY THAT SHAPES AND CHARACTERISES BUSINESS CULTURE IN CONTEMPORARY ZIMBABWE.

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